SPIRITUAL WORKS

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Rev. John Gother.

IN SIXTEEN VOLUMES.



VOL. VII.

NEWCASTLE:

PRINTED FOR AND SOLD BY F. COATES; MESS. KEATING, COGHLAN, AND BOOKER, IN LONDON; Wo-GAN AND CROSS, DUBLIN.



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AFTERNOON INSTRUCTIONS

FOR

SUNDAYS, HOLY-DAYS,
AND OTHER FEASTS, FROM LOW-SUNDAY TO ADVENT.

SPIRITUAL WORKS

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Rev. John Golher

IN SIXTEEN VOLUMES.

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INSTRUCTIONS

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olid and permane

N this day, when Christ, appearing to his Apostles, gave them the blessing of peace, Pax vobis, Peace be with you! The most proper subject must be, to consider, what this peace is, which is the christian's bleffing, and wherein it confifts; that fo, when it is known, every one may be in-dustrious in seeking it, and have some directions, how and where to find it.

There are two forts of peace offered to every christian; the peace of the world and the peace of God: The peace of the world is that which the world gives, and is like itself false, uncertain, and of little duration. The peace of God is that, Vol. VII.

which the world cannot give, but is the gift of God, and like himself, true, constant, and eternal. The peace of the world confilts in the possession and enjoyment of worldly goods; and these being uncertain and changeable, the peace which is built on them can be no better. The peace of God consists in the union of the heart with God, by a submission to his will, and a dependence on his goodness; and as the will and goodness of God are unchangeable; so the peace, which is built on this founda-

tion, mult be folid and permanent.

This peace, thus founded and established on the will and goodness of God, is that, which Christ gave to his Apostles, and is the christian's blessing; and he can have no solid comfort in this life, but what is the fruit of this peace. For though the divine bounty has provided many other blessings upon earth, which bring comfort to the natural man, as are those of plenty, or quiet, of friends, of children, of success, besides infinite others; yet none of these are the christian's blessing, nor give comfort to him, any farther than he sees them to be conformable to the divine will, and are the essects of his goodness to him; and whenever, in the use or enjoyment of these, he transgresses those bounds, which the will of God has fixt to them, though he possesses

the bleffings, yet he loofes both his comfort and peace; so that though he may rejoice as to the natural man; yet, as a christian, he is unhappy under the enjoyment. The reason is, because as far as he departs from the will of God, he is to far removed from the foundation of christian peace, and has no other comfort left, but only of fense or nature; and knowing all this comfort to be ill-grounded, that it has no dependence on God, that, instead of leading to him, it separates him from God, and puts him in danger of being eternally separated; hence the principles of faith, that are yet in him, become his daily reproach, and the convic-tion of a real unhappiness lies as a weight under that frothy joy, which makes him fmile to the world.

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From this principle it may be eafily concluded in what manner true peace is to be fought, and who they are that feek it. It must be fought, not by eagerly grasping at whatever courts the inclination; nor by using all means for gratifying the most violent defires, nor by the possession of what is thus with earnestness desired; but by considering in every propolal of human life, how thr the will of God gives encouragement to it. and not to move one step, either to the right, or to the left, or in advancing, but

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only as this marks out the way. And hence they alone are the persons, that seek true peace, who take no measures of what they do from themselves, but from the will of God, and give a check to all those desires, which they observe not agreeable to this sacred rule. Proceeding thus, these have always the satisfaction of resting in God, and find sufficient matter of joy in the peace of a well regulated conscience, even when nature is uneasy enough, and ready to murmur at the rigour of discipline.

This satisfaction of inward peace they find, even when the world is in disorder

This fatisfaction of inward peace they find, even when the world is in diforder about them; when rash judgments put ill constructions upon what they do, and paint them out in the most disadvantageous colours; when indiscretion or malice raises war against them, when sickness persecutes, want perplexes, or death threatens with its approaching terrors; they still have these interior retreshments comforting their soul; that all is according to the will of God; that the accomplishment of his will in them is their happiness; that all the evils they suffer will be to their advantage, in the fruit of an eternal crown; that they are in the hands of God; that it is their only concern, to be faithful in his service, to the best of their abilities; to think of no relief

by undue means, but to leave all to the appointments of his will. In this manner endeavouring at all times to fix their comfort in the testimony of a good conscience, ever subject to the will of God, they stand armed against all accidents, and it is not in the power of ill tongues, or a malicious world, to destroy that peace, which, being built on a sure foundation, cannot be injured

by their attempts.

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ne ef This being the temper of the christian spirit, where the bleshing of Christ prevails; it is what all christians ought daily to pray for, and daily labour to obtain; that they may rest in the will of God being done in them, and place their comfort in a good conscience. And ought not christians now of all degrees to look into the present state of their souls, and taking observation from their daily practice of the distance, in which they are from this spirit of inward peace, accordingly direct their prayers and endeavours for coming nearer to it?

How much have they yet to do, who,

How much have they yet to do, who, upon the usual disappointments of human life, afflict themselves, and know not how to keep their thoughts composed, or fit for discharging any duty to God or their neighbour, but when all things run smoothly on

according to their wish?

How much have they yet to do, who, upon any reproof of thole above them, or upon any leeming reproach, contempt, diffrespect, or ill humour of others, or from any accidental oversight of indiscretion, which they apprehend will lessen something of their esteem, presently lose all interior quiet, and have their minds disturbed with a thousand chimerical vindications, complaints and replies, till time wears out the impression, or some more considerable missiontune comes in to their relief, and shews them the unreasonableness of all such trouble?

How much have they yet to do, who, amidst the comforts of many blessings, or at least, with the supplies of all that is necessary, so far yield to the inclinations of a melancholy disposition, and open their hearts to the entertainments of afflicting sears and amusements, that unaccountable weights, darkness and storms are ever pressing upon their mind; so as to deprive them of all that liberty of spirit, in which their souls ought to seek and ascend to God?

their louis ought to feek and afcend to God?
All these, with many others, ought to remember, that they are not in the possession of that true peace, which Christ gave his Aposles; and that great endeavours ought to be used for obtaining it: For though it is

not to be expected, that a christian should be without feeling, or have no fense of what touches to the quick; yet it is expected, his heart should be better fixed, than to be pur into diforder, for every thing he feels; and his mind better principled, than to think fuch things worth its trouble which he ought to despite. What a contemptible thing is the peace of a christian breast, if it depends on the breath or humour of those with whom we converse? And how barren is the faith of eternal goods, where common difficulties and the unavoidable accidents of a dying life, put by all the concern of a life to come? Such peace as this is not built on God, or his bleffed will; it is not founded on a rock, but depends wholly upon humour, and therefore is as changeable as it. Wherefore fornething is to be done in this point, for fettling a peace upon better principles, and for bringing the mind to rest so much upon the will of God, as not to let every triffe, that comes crofs to inclination, be enough to put it into disorder. Let these endeavour to he faithful in their duty, and place their comfort in doing the will of God; and as for what others fay or do, this they ought not to think worth their concern or trouble.

But those christians who have the most to do, are foch as rashly pursue their inclina-

tions, as to interest, pleasure, honours, company, divertisements, &c. seeking in these to gratify their own private defires, without regarding, as they ought to do, how far they are displeasing to God. These are the farthest from true peace; for though their great business is to please themselves, and they are not without fatisfaction in what they do; yet this is far from being the christian peace; Non est pax implis : There is no peace to the wicked. They fee themselves living in the offence of God; they know their life to be short, and cannot tell, but they may be fnatched away under all the deformity of their fins, before the tribunal of any just God; and though they are industrious in stiffing all such thoughts, yet they cannot! wholly suppress them; though they often drown them, yet they will rife again, and at times not fail to represent to them the unhappiness of their present state, and of that which is yet to come. And what peace canthere be here, when they fee their unjust w gain and fatisfactions to be confined to a few moments; and that it is only the breath of an uncertain life, which divides them from eternal mifery, and everlasting torments? Can there be peace in fuch a prospect? No, there cannot be true peace to the wicked. These can have no peace, but what is to be

the effect of war, of a war against, themfelves, and all their finful paffions : For till by the endeavours of a laborious penance, they have gained this victory, made their peace with God, and thus provided for eternity, they can have no possibility of finding

peace within themselves.

In this manner are all christians, according to their feveral circumstances, to feek for peace. It is the effect of thy infinite mercy, O God, that thou wilt be the eternal peace of those that love thee; but it is likewife thy unchangeable decree, that none Thall come to the poffession of this eternal peace, but those alone, who feek thy peace upon earth. Grant, therefore, O God, that we may be all fincerely industrious in obtaining this bleffing of peace; grant, that in all we do, we may be directed by thy Holy Will; grant, that in all we fulfer, we may submit to thy Holy Will; may in this be our comfort and our peace, and thus may we come at length to find our eternal peace in thee, or bondary or at a square me with the moments with ment men of the broadfuller,



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AVING in fall Sunday's discourse said open the nature of christian peace, it belows plainly, from what has been there aid, that this peace is not an idle reft, exempt from all labour and pain, fuch as might be answerable to the wishes of sloth and self-love. Neither is it a perfect tran-quillity of mind, obtained by an entire defeat of all enemies; for this cannot be exected but as the happy portion of the next life; but it is a liberty of the children of God, the effect of a submission to the Divine Will, in all that he commands or permits.

This peace then depending entirely on the Divine Will, it cannot be a true and folid peace, but upon a true knowledge of the will of God. For if the will of God be not known, then there is a millake in the foundation, and confequently the beace built on fuch a millaken foundation, is not a true,

but deceitful peace.

As to the greatest part of what we suffer, the will of God is evident; because nothing happening in this world, but by his pleafure or permission, it must be his will that we patiently suffer and submit; and a peace of mind grounded on this fubmission, is a true christian peace. It is the same likewise, as

to the greatest part of what we have to do in this life, because God has manifested his will, as to all moral duties, by the law he has written in the hearts of all; upon which Saint Paul lays, Rom. ii, 14. That even the Gentiles, who have not the law that was given to Moles, may do by nature the things contained in the law, because these, having not the law, are a law to themselves who shew the work of the law written in their hearts, their confeience bearing witnels of them, and their thoughts accusing or excusing one another. And hence he concludes, that whatever these do of evil. the guilt of hin shall be charged upon them. because they are without excuse, Rom. i. 20. And that as many as have finned without a law. shall also perish without a law, e. ii. 12. Now if this be fo, as to the heathers, who have no more than the light of nature to direct them, and by the visible things are to learn the eternal power and Godhead of him that made them; how much more must it be so to christians, who have not only the same light of nature, but the whole law of God delivered to them in the commandments and Sacred Scripture, by which they are more exprelly instructed in the whole will of God? And if heathens are without excuse, in not doing the will of God, where shall christians The transfer and a product of the AM

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find their excuse, who have so much greater opportunities of knowing it? It can be no wonder, that as many of these, as fin in the law, shall be judged by the law. Ib.

By this law then, thus written and delivered, christians may understand the will of Gody in their particular actions under the heads of their feveral moral duties ; and by taking this for the rule of what they do, they have the means of laying the foundation of true peace in their fouls. Hence may be feen, what it is that makes a good confcience, which is to absolutely necessary for this peace in it is the regulation of our thoughts, of our words, and actions, according to the law and will of God. When we do this. we have the testimony of a good conscience bearing witness of what we do. When we act contrary to this law, we have an ill confcience reproving and appearing against us; and this would be enough for our condend hat on, were there no other law to judge us, but that of our own conference. I to dead

From this principle it is manifest. That to live and act according to the principles of education, is not enough for a good conscience, and consequently, not for laying the ground of true peace. The reason is clear, because education is not the rule of a good conseience, but the law of God; and therefore, till the method of education be brought to this tell, and firialy examined, to fee whether it be conformable to this law, the christian has not sufficient motives for refting in it; and if he does reft in it, he acts not according to the light of reason, which has this principle imprinted in it ; that the will of God ought to be his rule. vadly, It is manifest, that to follow customs, general practices, the example of parents, of friends, of company, the fentiments of thoseto whom we are affected is not enough for a good confcience, and confequently, not for laying the ground of true peace. The teafon is the fame; because many customs, practices, and often the example of parents friends, &c. are not agreeable to the law of God, but contrary to it; and the law of God being the christian's rule, no custom practice, or example, can be followed with a good conscience, till, upon examination, it being found conformable to the law of God. zigdly. It is manifest, that to follow the bent of private inclination, is not sufficient ground for a good conscience. Because private inclinations being generally the effect of corruption, are contrary to the law of God, and lead to all kinds of fin; and therefore, till they are well examined, to follow them cannot be the way to peace, but only of that falle peace, which ends in eternal confulioning of both bedrong com all or maling and

for fear of damnation. What is to be done

The law of God then is the way to peace, and the rule of a good confeience: But what is to be done in fuch cales, which being not exprelly determined in this law, are to be refolved by the force of reason, by inferences, deductions and applications? Here there mult necessarily be great danger of miltakes; because every one's capacity does not qualify him for doing this with any tothrough weakness of reason and overlight; there may be as great miliakes where the reason is found, but insuenced by interest, education, affection, or other passions. And thele being already call outres not sufficient for laying the ground of a good conscience; in what an uncertain condition must christians be, when having the law of God before them, the application of it is in the hands of fuch passions or weakness, as are not capa-ble of doing it without injuries to justice or truth? What must the conscience be, when thefe are the interpreters and judges of the law do This danger is still greater when the truth is to be determined of such mysteries of faith, which though contained in the law, are yet to expressed, that they may be very differently understood, and are differently understood by men of great learning and profeffed piery; fo that what fome believe as truths necessary to falvation, others dare not believe for fear of damnation. What is to be done

in these cases for settling a good conscience, and obtaining true peace of mind? and these odle is certain that in all doubtful cales of the divine law, whether in points of justice, or of faith, there is great danger of being influenced by interest, convenience, affection, or education; none of which are good interprefor a good conscience or solid peace of mind. But however the law of God has determined what is to be done in these cases, for avoiding mistakes. For God has appointed pastors and priests as judges of the people; and to them application is to be made for the refo Jution of whatever doubts occur. This was the express ordination of God in the Old Testament, Deut. xvii. 8. where he gives command, that matters of controverly should be brought before the priests; that the perple should do according to the sentence thefe should pronounce, without declining Either to the right hand or to the lefe; and that the man that should do presumptuously, and not hearken to the priest should be put to death. And the encouragement the peaple had for this reference and submiffice, is delivered by the prophet Malachia carian. For that the priest's lips should keep knowledge and they fronte feels the law at his mouth; for he is the angel (or messenger) of the Land of Hester. Thus were doubts to be removed, and for fear of dampation. What, is to be done

both peace of mind and a good conscience to

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be obtained in the Old Law.

It is the same in the New: For Christ has given pastors and teachers in his church; and as he was fent by his Father, fo he has fent them, 70. xx. 21. And for what? To be overfeers, and to feed the church of Christ, Act. xx. 38, For the perfecting of the faints; for the work of the ministry, for edifying the body of Christ. That we beneeforth be no more children, toffed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, Ephef. iv. 11. Here is part of their commission; and are not they here declared to be the teachers of all that is necessary for perfecting the faints. and establishing the faithful in truth? Are not all matters of justice and of faith here included? And are not the people commanded to hear them? He that hears you, fays Christ, bears me: And be that despises you, despises me, Luk. x. 16. mgo die in go

Here then, while christians have those put over them by Christ, who being his ministers, act by his authority, and are to direct them in all that belongs to salvation; is it not plain, what they are to do in all disticult and doubtful cases? Christ has manifested his will to them; and since a submission to the will of God is the only means for obtaining true peace, and settling a good conscience, they may be assured their way to

truth and peace, is to confult those whom God has put over them for this end, and ordained that they should be directed by them.

But while the pastors are men, like others, may not they be influenced by interest, affection or education, as well as the people? This question the Uraelites might have alked concerning Moses and Auron; and whatever the answer might have been, yet still since God had so ordered it, they were obliged to be directed by them; and by no other means could they come to the peace of a good conscience. The question therefore to be asked by christians is not, whether pastors are weak like others? But whether God has appointed them to be guides to the people, and commanded these to hear and obey them? If he has, his will is to be done, and it is the only way they have to peace. Here is their rule, and their good is in the following it; with a confidence always in God, that he, who has given them pattors, and commanded them to hear and lubmit, will either provide them fuch as are qualified for their charge, or at least not charge any overfights of pattors upon them; fince they fubmission is what he himself has appointed. But fince all the confidence is from God, because he has commanded pastors to teach and the people to hear; it may be easily understood how to come to peace of con-

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fcience in the true church of Christ; be cause the command of Christ is to his church, and his goodness is engaged to the pastors of it, and the people have his exprefs order for acquiefcing in their direction. But out of it how is this to be found; fince no learning is a privilege against mistakes, or the bials of interest and education; and the truth and goodness of God engaged to the Apostles cannot be claimed, but in virtue of a fuccession to them? Here then the confidence cannot be in God, but in human learning only; and what a poor ground is this for a good confeience, in the folution of fuch difficulties and doubts, which are above all that is human, and no fecurity of truth can be expected, but only from God? Wherefore, fince all peace of a good conscience can proceed from no other foundation, but from a submission to the will of God, grant, A befeech thee, O God, that all may fincerely feek thy will, and there feek it, where thy infinite truth and goodness are engaged for finding it. I confess, O God, my whole confidence is in thy promifes, and if am not within those bounds, where I can hope for the effects of them, I own myfelf to be in a total despair of inward peace; because all that is human is deceitful, and cannot afford reft to my foul. underlied how to come

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Third SUNDAY after EASTER. the address volume to an decided the man be eather

T TAVING shewn in the foregoing Sun-I days, that true peace of mind and a good conscience can have no other foundation, but only in a conformity and submission to the will of God; hence may be feen the necessity of obedience in all christians, for coming to the possession of a true peace, and this shall be the subject of the present discourse, to enquire what christian obediefice is, with the general circumstances belonging to its an most bine south file and

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Obedience is a virtue, which makes a man ready to do the will of God, in whatever way the divine will is made known to us, whether immediately from God himfelf, or from those, whom he has set over us. By virtue of this obedience, we are, in effect, divelted of our own will, and with all fincerity refign the whole disposition of ourselves to God; so that while we feel particular inclinations within us, as likewife a particular bent of fancy, opinion, and judgment, yet we fulpend all these faculties. as far as they are subject to us, and only give them the liberty of approving, or diff approving, of condemning, or abetting as

the will of God directs. By this virtue we are much raised above ourselves; whilst ourfelves having a reason, that is always weak, very often rath and blind, and a will most perversly corrupt, such as would lead us into temporal follies and eternal mifery; by the help of this obedience, we have the unerring truth of God to become our reason, and his infinite wildom to be our will, to direct us in our judgment and our choice, And hence it becomes true, that whoever has this obedience, does not now judge or chase for himself, but God judges and chases for him. What greater happinels can man defire, who is every way so deceitful in himfelf than to be under the conduct of his God, whose overflowing goodness cannot fail of leading him fecure through all the difficulties of life, and bringing him at length to the inseparable participation of himfelf?

This is fo great a happiness to man, that he must be a fool, who understands it not; and maliciously foolish, who makes this the reproach of human reason; and mad, who accepts it not. The only wisdom is to defire God to be the universal guide of our reason, our judgment, and our will; and wherever he is pleased to manifest his will, to follow it in all simplicity of mind, without

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raifing doubts or questions; with all freedom and cheerfulness, with all humility, confidence, and perfeverance, so as to let no human confiderations interpose. This was the obedience of Abrabam, when being called by God to go out of his country, he went out, not knowing, as S. Paul fays, whither he went. Heb. xi. 8. And again, when being commanded to facrifice his fon, he undertook it, without admitting doubts of the lawfulness of the action; for what has man to do in moving doubts where God commands? This was the obedience of Ifaiah. when at the command of God, he walked naked and barefoot three years, Ifa. xx. 2. This the obedience of the Apostles, when they left all, to follow Christ, without confidering how they were to fubfift; and in undertaking the conversion of the world. though they were but twelve, poor, illiterate men, little qualified for preaching, and much less for opposing the errors and power of the whole world.

These are examples of the most perfect obedience upon earth, such as evacuates the whole will of man, and centres him wholly in God. And yet it is what we are bound to follow, as often as God's will is expressly manifest to us. This we are bound to do, First, in our understanding, by receiving

and firmly, affenting to the truth of such mysteries, as God has revealed to us, though these mysteries are in themselves so obscure to us, that all the reason we have, is not able to give us any light in them. It is enough, that God has revealed them; our understanding must submit and obey, it must be captivated, as the Apostle says in obedience to Christ, 2. Cor. x, 5. The same obedience of our reason to God is necessary in all the works of Providence; in many of which, though we cannot comprehend the motives upon which God acts; nay, though they seem contrary to all we apprehend, yet upon the principle of his unnerring wisdom, we are obliged to confess, that whatever God does, is best to be done.

This is properly called blind obedience, because we obey without seeing, and though presuming wit may lay a scandal upon it, yet nothing is more reasonable; since it is nothing but the subjection of man to God, of human judgment to the judgment and wisdom of God. They that cannot understand this, have not the first principle of christianity in them; and they, that revise it, set themselves above God, and make way for atheism. It is enough, and not only enough, but the greatest mercy to a

christian, that he is not left to the weakness of his own dim reason, but has God to lead him; and if he leads him, as he did Soul, Acts ix. 3, who opening his eyes faw nothing; yet his security is not the less, but the greater on this account, because now his confidence is not in his own seeing, but in

God that directs him.

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Let then the conceited world trust in the vanity of their own feeing and knowing, and upon this fandy foundation raise their pleasing schemes of wit and religion: let these put in their exceptions against divine truths, and facrilegiously bring down all to the level of their own apprehension, and thus go on to a heaven of their own making. like their religion. But, as for the disciple of the Gospel, let altum sapere; being too wife, be more the object of his fears, than his wishes; let him be contented to go on without feeing where God leads the way: and never defire the light of his own reason his guide, when he has the wildom of God for his teacher. It must be owned, that our only danger of erring, is from the miltakes of our own reasoning: And who then, that has the least glimple of reason. would not be glad of fuch a guide, under whole conduct, he may be carried on fecure, especially, where the danger is in the concern of eternity? Would any complain here of being led on in the dark, or refuse to go forward, because, with their own eyes, they could not discern the way? Deliver me, O God, from this madness, it is the effect of thy infinite goodness, that thou hast been pleased to teach us; I have reason enough to see this mercy; but as for questioning thy truths, because my restless curiosity is not fatisfied, and my reason cannot see into them; far be this from me. Be thou but my guide, and though my reason can discern no more of what thou teachest, than my eyes, I shall go on content and cheerful, I shall ask no questions, nor raise any doubts. And if the world reproach me of blindness, I shall reply, it is my comfort and glory, that I have better eyes than my own to see for me.

This ready obedience of the understanding to God, is not only to be, when God speaks immediately by himself; but likewise in whatever other way he is pleased to manifest his truths and will to us. The only thing that obliges us to submit, is the divine authority; and whether this appears immediately in God, or in his angels, prophets, or apostles, as sent by him, the obligation in us is the same; because the authority is still of God speaking to us. And consequently

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to dispute, question, or resist what these deauthority or truth of God. Hence, because Christ commanded the Apostles to preach his Gospel, promised to give them his Holy Spirit, established them the pastors of his church, solemnly engaged that his spirit frould abide with them for ever to lead them into all truth; that whoever heard them should hear him; that, not to hear them and his church, should be the guilt of heatherism; because, I say, of this folerm deputation and commission from Christ, every christian is bound to believe the church of Christ to be vested with a divine authority. that by the spirit of God it delivers to us the truths of God; and to except against what it teaches, is to question the truth of God. Here then is required a ready submission of the judgment and reason; because the authority of God appears in the delivery; and it can be no matter of just demur, though the things delivered are not agreeable to private fentiments, not fuitable to our imagination, and not to be comprehended by our reason; because it is the nature of divine mysteries to be thus superior to us; and the authority which recommends them, is for absolute, as to oblige us to an affent, even where we do not fee. This again may be Vol. VII.

called blind obedience, because it is faith without feeing; and yet there is fight enough to make it a free and rational act, fince the understanding sees divine motives, even the authority of God, for its fubmission. This blindness then, has so much greater comfort and certainty in it, than what our own reafon can give them whatever, (by its own natural light, it feems to comprehend) as the authority of God's truth is above the certainty of natural reason. And what more than this can a christian desire? Let then here again prefuming men, fond of their own reasoning, boast of their seeing by that light which their reason gives; for my part, I had rather go on blind under the conduct and authority of God, than trust in all the reason and learning in the world. And what is this, but only that God is a furer guide than man? This is a principle univerfally true and fecure; and how much more fo, in regard of those truths which are above the comprehension, not only of ordinary reason, but of all the learning of which it is capable in this life? Upon this principle then our understanding is to be cheerfully, and, without exception, obedient to God, and to those whom he has commanded us to hear, as vested with his authority. od (sin instal said) be

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And not only our understanding, but our will, with all the affections of it, ought, in the fame manner, to be obedient to God; for that in whatever particulars God has been pleafed to manifest his will to us, we are obliged to suppress all our own inclinations and defires, and entirely subject them to the will of God. The reason is, because the will of God being holy and perfect, and the will of man perverily bent to evil, we can have no other means for preventing the mischiefs of our own corrupt will, than by making the will of God the rule of ours. Upon this ground it is, that we are daily to offer this petition to God, Thy will be done on earth, as it is in beaven. In which we beg, that the will of God may be done in us; that we may have at all times regard to the Divine Will, and feek to perform that, and not our own. Upon the same principle it is, that all the followers of the Gospel are obliged to felf-denials, fince they cannot perform the will of God, which is holy, but by denying their own, that is corrupt. And because there is a stubbornness in our will, which will not yield, but by force, hence arises the necessity of mortification, for bring ing ourfelves into a more ready subjection to the Divine Will; and those chuse the better part, who live in a perpetual exercise of

felf-denial and obedience to a superior, that so by the daily contradiction of their own will, they may be more ready in their obedience to the will of God: Since nothing can make us more ready in any duty, than the daily practice of it; and nothing can put us more out of the danger of an enemy, than every day to weaken him one one of dul.

In this manner is our understanding and will to be obedient to God, and nothing more than this can contribute to our comfort and peace here, or to our coming to the kingdom of eternal peace. What then are we to alk this day of God, but that he would be pleafed to take from us all fullbornness and felf-conceit, that these feeds of rebellion being removed, we may entirely conform our judgments to the truths of God, and our wills to his presents, without Vietting our own private thoughts be argument enough for excepting against there who are commissioned by him to teach as know and do the will of Godd. He was that

some may be mi erable, through the efforts. of their own will, all are commanded to be obedient, that to in the will of God all

We no fooner with into the world, but our general weaknessmakes jubjection nede. lary, we mainediately pending it we are left B. ig

for by the daily contradiction of their own will, that the response of their obedence to the will of God Since nothing

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TYROM what was faid last Sunday, it must Le be evident to all, that no true peace of mind can be obtained without obedience. Public peace cannot be maintained, but by obedience to those to whom it is due: So it is with the peace of the foul; if it does not know what it is to be subject, and how to alequiesce in their orders, to whom it is subject, it may trave the fatisfaction of its own. will; but is fo far out of the way of peace, that nothing is to be expected but ruin. The reason of this is, because there can be the true peace of mind, but from doing the will of God. Confusion and war are from out own will, but peace is from the will of God Now Got has fo ordered it, that by phodience we are delivered from the mifchiefs of our own will, and are taught to know and do the will of God. Hence, that none may be miserable, through the effects of their own will, all are commanded to be obedient, that so in the will of God all may find peace.

We no fooner come into the world, but our general weakness makes subjection necesfary; we immediately perish, if we are left

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to ourselves; and by being subject, we do the will of God, as far as he requires of us. When two or three years begin to lead us out of our infancy, our danger is still from ourselves, we begin to find we have a will of our own, and this being not capable of diftinguishing what is hurtful to us, we are under a necessity of being subject, and by complying with that fubjection, we then do the will of God. As we grow up, the faculties of the foul are improved; but, from our natural corruption, our will generally gets much the flart of our understanding; whence we are more strongly bent upon what pleases our own humour, than upon confidering what is good and advantageous to us: This is the misfortune of all our youth; and hence a general fierceness, rashness, immoderate felf-love and vanity being the attendants of these years, there is still a necessity of subjection; and not only nature and law, but a providential mercy has put us under the care of our parents; these are set over us by the order of God, to direct us; it is God commands us to be obedient to them; by this obedience we do the will of God; and by disobedience, or undertaking any thing without consulting them, without their permission or consent, we transgress the orwhite own tropped to the the stand of

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der of God, depart from his will, and are dilobedient to him. It is book to live out

When maturity of years and judgment, or other circumstances, have taken us from our parents care, yet still this liberty is attended with subjection, and has an obedience annext to it. Wherever our lot falls, we cannot pretend to exemption; it being the condition of this life in general, and not only of a particular state. There is a particular tye indeed of fervants to mafters, and of wives to hufbands; but where there is no fuch engagements, yet still all are to be fubject to higher powers. All are to be fubject to the temporal government, all are to be subject to the church. Thus it is constituted by God, and he requires it at our hands; fo that whatever obedience we pay, it is an obedience, not to men only, but to God. Servants are required to be obedient to their masters, as to Christ; not as menpleasers, but as the servants of Christ, doing the wil of God from the heart, doing service as to the Lord, and not to men, Ephes. vi. 5. 6. 7- Children are required to be obedient to their parents: Children, obey your parents in all things, for this is well-pleasing to the Lord, Coloff. in. 20. Wives are required to be obedient: Wives submit yourselves to your own husbands, as to the Lord; for the

bushand is bead of the wife, even as Christ is head of the church in Therefore, as the church is Subject to Christs to let suives be to their bushands in every thing, Ephel. v. 22, 23, 24. All are required to be obedient to igher powers: Let every foul be subject to the higher powers, for there is no power but of God; subsever therefore relifieth power, relifits the ordinance of God, Rom. xiii. i. All are required to be obedient to the church: Obey them, that have the rule over gov, and submit yourselves; for they watch for your fouls, as they, that must give account. Heb. xiii. 17. Tell the church; but if he neglects to hear the church, let him be to thee es a beathen, Mat. xviii. 17. He, that requeth God, bears us; he that is not of God, bears put us: Hereby know was the Spirit of bruth, and the spirit of error, 1 John iv. 6.

In this manner God has constituted the world, and by obedience appointed order and good discipline to be maintained, not only in private families, but likewise in nations, kingdoms, and in the church; and left this the general means, by which all should come to the true knowledge of his will; and to the peace of conscience. Hence all are to seek his will in the manner, as he has ordained: Children from their parents, servants from their masters, wives from their vants from their masters, wives from their

hurbands, fubjects from their magistrates according to the respective duties, in which God has commanded them to be subject to thefes to whom, for this end, he has given power over them; and, as to faith, and the doctrine of Christ, all are to seek the will of God from the church; because, though there are, by God's appointment divertity of families and kingdoms, which are to be fubject to their respective heads and rulers, as to the civil and political goof God, that all, thus divided, should be united in one faith, this his faith is not to be learnt from malters or rulers, but from life church, which is but one, and in which he has commanded a union of all; fo that though there may be divertity of civil go vernments, yet there is to be a union of all in belief. For which end, we fee the Apostles were sent by Christ into all nations, and the command of hearing and believing them was given alike to all. Go ye into all. the world, and preach the gospel to every areatures. He, that believes, and is baptized, shall be faved; but be, that believes not, shall be dannied, Mark zun 19. One body, one fpirit, enen as you are called one bope; one Lord, one faith, one buptifin, one God and Father of olly Ephel iv. w. statism rish most sum

Thus is our obedience to have different regards, according to the subjection God requires of us, and according to the intimation he has given us, for the knowledge of his will in our different duties. And this obedience is not arbitrary, or left to our discretion, but it is absolute; because, though the persons, to whom we are subject, are no more than creatures; et the power which they have, is from God; There is no power but of God; and therefore the obedience, required above by the Apostle, is to be given, Sicut Christo; sicut servi Christi; sicut Domino; as to Christ; as the servants of Christ; as to our Lord: And the disabedience is declared to be resisting the ordinance of God. Whence all that are in any subjection, that is, all may fee how great their obligation of obedience is, that it is God demands it of them, that it is to be paid as to God, that the breach of it is resisting God. These are points which ought to be confidered by christians, as being of the greatest concern to them, and therefore not to be transgressed upon every humour or provocation; but to he observed with fidelity as to God; and though the persons to whom this obedience is due, may, through any supposed or real unworthiness, feem not to deserve it; yet wilder and ended controlled the Here is the in

fince God demands the obedience, and his power may be in persons otherwise undeserving, as it was in the Scribes and Pharisees, it is not to be denied them, and their unworthiness can be no dispensation for our obedience.

But however, there is some difference in the obedience exacted from us: For though the command be absolute, of obeying those who are in power from God, as parents, masters, rulers; yet this is to be understood, when they command according to the power which they have received from God: For. First, If they command such things as are evidently contrary to the law of God, in this case the Apostle enjoins us to obey God rather than man. 2dly, If what they require of us be evidently contrary to the commands of a higher power, to which they are fubordinate; for here their authority being only ministerial, they cannot have power of commanding contrary to those, whose ministers they are. 3dly, If what they command evidently exceeds their commission, and regards such things, in which God has not fubjected us to them; for in this cale the power pretended is usurpation, and this brings no tie upon their confciences, who otherwise are subject to them. But this is to be understood, only when there is evidence

in these particulars, for if the case be doubtful, both divines and lawyers agree, that me imposed for the condition passion of the passion of the presumed on their side of and right is to be presumed on their side of Whence all those must be esteemed criminal, to both before God and man, who, upon their side own private opinions, or upon objections revised either by their own doubts, of the side others, disturb the order of families, of the side civil government, or of the church. For similar where God requires an absolute obedience, where God requires an absolute obedience his seommand ought to over-rule all sides doubts; and the guilt can be nothing seigns than sedition or schim; both which are set of down by the Apossle, as crimes that exclude as from the kingdom of heaven.

Let therefore all who are subject, peaceably of remain in that order, of subjection in which of God has placed them; and not permit amend bition, or the love of novelty, to deceive whem under the colour of conference

them under the colour of confeience as 30 colors in last selfa to bliffied government, and requires obedience as both in families, and in the state, and in this church; and though in human radians one thing can be is done, but it may be liable to the company of prejudice, passion, envy of

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jealous or ambition; hay, withough there mi equity may be zealous to reform a yet this is no warrant for those, who are subjects, to fet up a standard against the power that is over them; for if the aggriculances are real, and such as cannot be approved, yet they are to be tolerated ftill with patience; and if modelt remonstrances are without effect : they are to wait till God is pleafed to change the hearts of the rulers, or raile up fuch who, by his own power, may reform the featidals liby which his power bhas been in abufed. God's positive ordinance seems a bar against all other attempts : And though it ig should be done with that usual success, as di to thaves corruptiond reformed, nor aggrievances redreffed; yet the loss is still muchob greater than the gain; fince the mon confiderable reformations, can have no proportion to that one milchief, of breaking in s upon stherchurch; being bar precedent 3 which days the undertakers ever after open of to the attempts of all those, whose ambitioned; or militaken zeal gives them hopes of duccels and thus dendles confusions becomes the id fruit of their rashness, who could not for dead church; and though in hum saluda nad emit

O God, offince thou haft laid fuch anits obligation of lobedience upon uso give susuls

grace to fatisfy this duty; that no passion of ours may carry us over those bounds, which thou halt fixt for the common peace. Grant that in families, in state, and in church, all may have the sense of what thou hast ordained, and that no inconveniences, no blind zeal or ambition, may persuade us to dispense with the obedience thou hast enjoined.

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Sunday of

Fifth SUNDAY after EASTER.

TPON the principles already laid down, it appears, how great is the danger of fin, in diffurbing the order of goverment, which God has established in families, and in the state; and that though there may be cases in which obedience is not due, yet there is fuch evidence necessary in these cases, that one may eafily be deceived through rashness or passion; and we may be surprised in the guilt of the greatest crimes, by being too forward in taking the dispensations, which these offer. This is much more so in religious families, where the tie of obedience being fo much stricter, there cannot be easily fufficient evidence for disputing authority; and consequently the suggestions to all fuch fcandalous controversies, are more to be suspected of passion.

And is it not then much more so in the church of Christ, in regard of all matters of faith? For, wherever this church be, if Christ has commanded all to believe there is such a church, by making this an article of our creed; if he ordained this church for teaching the whole world the truth of his Cospel; if he commanded all to hear and

believe this churchd wunder; the penalty of reputed heatheriful and damnation; lift sfor making good the teltimony of the church, he declared it the purchase of his blood, wared himself the hend of it, the corner-Cone and foundation, folemnly engaged his word, that the Holy Spirit should lead it ate all truth, to the end of the world; and bide with it for ever, and hence published to the whole world, to be the ground and illar of thath; if, I fay, the church of Christ was thus founded, thus established ins fecured in truth, by the superintendency the Holy Ghost, and the promise of the ternal truth, as is attelled in Holy Writing lain, positive, and express terms; how reat must be the obligation upon all of searing and believing what it teaches? And from whence can there be evidence fufficient or calling in question what it delivers, or efuling affent to its doctrines! From whence can arife this evidence of red to the to foogles

If private interpretation of Holy Write moves difficulties; if learned men of reputed piety, and exemplar lives, raile objections; if a national fynod, or any particular church; from their exposition of scripture, censure and condemn its doctrines; here will be objections, it is true, and such as may give disturbance to private reason, at the orse

furprise on least; but when the point is son fidered, what is the authority of thefe eb-jections, to the evidence of God's command of believing, and express promise of truth; which are ion the other fide? What is the authority of private or national reason, against the authority and truth of God? What must reufon do, upon the proposals of this question? If it be over-ruled by educa tion or interest; it may be unwilling to yield; and find topics, for keeping up the controverify it But if it be left to that natural light which God has given it, it must see a necesfity of confelling, that the authority of God's command, of his truth and promife, is above all the objections of private or national reason; and that the fubmission, which he requires, cannot be in reason refused upon such ob jections a service at the transfer on the man

followed in regard of the church, as in respect of all other lawful authorities? Obedience is regularly due to these; and yet if they command any thing contrary to the law of God, they are not to be obeyed. If then the church be found to teach contrary to the word of God, why may it not be lawful, nay, why is it not a duty, to differ from her? The Scripture will not allow this case to be supposed; because though, all

other authorities have obedience due to them; yet those, who are vested with such power, having no promise of God, to secure them from laying unlawful commands, they may be so blinded with passion, as to require of their subjects, what is absolutely contrary to the law of God, and the truth of the Gospel; but it is not so with the church of Christ; for this being founded by Christ for teaching the truth of his gospel; and being every way qualified for this end, by the promised assistance of Christ and his Holy Spirit abiding with her for ever, to lead her into all truth, how can she be found teaching contrary to the world of God? And if any persons or nations expound the Scripture contrary to what she teaches, is not the divine establishment of the church, and the promise of God made to her, enough to make interpreters condemn themselves of prefumption, for going contrary to the church, rather than condemn the church of error, for teaching contrary to them?

But, however, if we suppose at present,

But, however, if we suppose at present, the church to be upon the level with other authorities, and, like them, subject to error; yet whence will the evidence appear, of the church teaching contrary to the truth of God's word, which case alone can be a warrant for not receiving what she teaches?

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If private persons, or a national church, interpret the Scripture, in a sense contrary to what the church delivers, where is the evidence of their being in the right? It must be owned by all, that the words of Scripture may be thus differently interpreted, and that one interpretation seems right to one, and the contrary sense to another; but this carries nothing of evidence with it of the truth, and has no more in it, than this seems so to me; which is not enough for refusing obedience to those, who are in the possession of any lawful power.

If the authority of learned and fober men is found to confirm the interpretation of Scripture contrary to what the church teaches; and it cannot be imagined that such men, whose learning and moral virtue raife them above the fuspicion of mistake or interest, should maintain such doctrine, did they not fee it to be the right; yet this brings no evidence to the case; for if the church be considered it will presently appear, that in her communion are far greater numbers of men, no ways inferior to thefe in learning and virtue, who believe the exposition delivered by the church to be the genuine fense of the Holy Scripture, and venture their falvation on this belief. Now where can the evidence be of the former being in the right; fince whatever their authority be, there is as great authority on the other fide? For though put in the feales alone it has truly weight; yet when the other is fent in the other part of the balance, it does not now outweigh, but is only upon the level; and how then can there be evidence from fach authority fufficient for withdrawing from the obedience commanded by

God to be given to the church?

If the authority of many reverend bishops affembled in a fynod, and of a national church, be produced afferting those expositions of Holy Writ, contrary to what the church gives; yet this again is no evidence of the doctrine of the church being contrary to God's word, because there are many more, and much greater affemblies of as reverend bishops, which have declared the doctrines of the church to be agreeable to the Holy Scripture, and to be the true fenfe of what is there delivered. So that if the authority of the first-mentioned affemblies feems to be fufficient evidence of what they teach, if heard and confidered alone by themselves, yet it cannot be efteemed fo, when it is confronted by a greater authority, deposing upon their falvation quite contrary to them, od an no positives the standard in the armed consider will see a see

If appeal be made to antiquity and to the primitive fathers, and many texts be produced out of these in sayour of those expositions of Holy Writ, contrary to the doctrine of the church: Here again is no evidence to determine the point in debate; because as many and fuller texts are produced out of the same primitive fathers, afferting those very doctrines, which are taught by the church.

If the authority of learned men or of a

If the authority of learned men or of a national church, declares the doctrines of the church to be innovations, shews the time of their being first introduced and imposed upon the world; yet this again is no evidence; because there is a greater authority declaring the contrary; even the authority of the pastors of the church then assembled, when these very points were first called in question, and upon due examination declaring, and with their salvation engaged in the truth of what they declared, that these doctrines were such as the church then believed, and had been delivered down to them, as the sense of the Scriptures, and the doctrine of the Apostles.

Thus whatever head be confidered, there is no evidence of the doctrines of the church being contral y to God's word; all that can be justly pretended, is, that there are difficulties and objections raised against the doctrines

of the church, and to there are against the most fundamental principles of christianity, and against the bible itself: But what then? Are doctrines presently to be condemned, because there are objections against them? Give these objections their whole force; may let us suppose them aberted by an authority, which yet is not equal to that of the church; yet still this does no more, than make the case doubtful; for equals against equals are no evidence; but only make things dubious. And now if there be no legal title upon earth which is made void, by being made doubtful; if there be no legal authority upon! earth, which upon doubts or objections, can be disobeyed and resisted without fin : how much more unwarrantable and finful must it be to disobey and resist the church of Christ, only upon doubts moved against her, when, fhe is founded and fecured by better promifes than any other authority whatever? Nothing but evidence will justify in other cases, how then can less do here?

Well but if the case be rendered doubtful, why is not this as bad for the church as for those that oppose her doctrines? It is not; because the church was established by. Christ to teach all, and he commanded all to hear and believe her, and being vested with this authority, it stands good (abstracting from

all promises) till there be evidence of her having forseited the right, that was given her; and till then, all are obliged to hear and submit to the doctrines, in virtue of the first command: For if doubts and objections moved by subjects, were warrant enough for their disobedience, how would this unhinge all governments, and lay open the whole world to confusion? Let but the case be put in any civil power, and the case is clear; for what would be sedition or rebellion here, much certainly be schism in the church.

But which is this church? Till this be proved, we are no nearer the end of this debate. The debate itself clears this point; for while all agree, which was the primitive and true church of Christ, and refule obedience to her at present, upon this plea only, of her having forfeited her primitive right by innovations and errors, all in this declare which this church is : And as her primitive authority is acknowledged, fo in all the justice of common reason and law it must stand good, till the doubts moved against her are raised to the degree of evidence. This cannot be done, as has been shewn, from the common heads pressed against her, though we abstract from all the promises of Christ; and if now we add these, to fortify her title, that Christ, who is the unerring

Ascentication

commanded all ere the truth, providence nothing lefs than the prefumption of human realon against God, for overshrowing a con-stitution, which his instalte wildow has founded, and evacuating, in effect, his infe-parable attributes of goodness and truth upon which his ehurch hands, and which are its fecurity for teaching truth to the confummation of the world. Infinite thanks are due to thee, O God, who requiring us to believe the church, half given us frield fecurity for our faith: Thy truth is not weakened by the who refuse to believe; But grant them a fense of their injustice. who divel the church of the authority then half given it, upon fuch a plea as no court would allow against the meanest title upon earth mound in somet The while have been about the design and the

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ASCENSION DAY.

Australy apparation

THIS day's mystery is the ascension of our Blessed Redeemer into heaven; and in this we see the reward of that obedience of which we have hitherto spoken; Christ hambled himself, and became obedient to death, even the death of the cross; wherefore God also has highly exalted him, Phil. ii. 8. This the Apostle speaks upon another occasion; but it is likewise true in this, that the meritorious cause of Christ's ascension was because he became obedient in all things to his father's will, and that therefore God has exalted him: So says S. Chrysostom, on this epistle, Extremam Christus prastitit obedientiam, proptered accept & supremum honorem, Christ stooped to the lowest degree of obedience, therefore is he raised to the highest degree of honour.

In which we have encouragement enough for complying with that obedience which God demands of us, either immediately to himself, in the observance of his will and commandments, or to others, to whom he has given power over us; there being no one act of obedience, but if performed in the spirit of Christ will associate us with

Vol. VII.

Christ ascending, and exalt us with him. This Almighty God has sufficiently testified in Holy Scripture, by declaring how acceptable obedience is to him. First, In acknowledging, that obedience is better than facrifice; and to give ear to him, rather than to offer the fat of rams. 2dly, In the plentiful blessing he gave to Abraham, and owning it all to be the effect of his obedience, Gan, xxii. 16. 3dly, In requiring no other condition from the Israelites for being his people, than that of obedience only, fer. xi. 4. Lastly, In Christ proposing the same only condition to his followers; Tou, says he, are my friends, if you do the things I command you. 70. xv. 14.

These and many other arguments God has given us in Holy Writ, to invite us to the obedience which he demands of us, and to encourage us to break through whatever difficulties we meet with in satisfying this duty. There are great difficulties in the obedience to his own law, while natural corruption raises an aversion to it, and the great torrent of the world carries us another way. There is difficulty in submitting with a ready affent to the faith he teaches, whilst our curiosity and pride are never willing to receive upon credit; and pretending to know all things, are not easy in bearing the

humbling conviction of their own blindness, in acknowledging the truth of such mysteries.
of which they know nothing. There is
difficulty again in our obedience to those,
who have a superiority over us, especially when their commands fuit not with our humour or interest, when any disagreeable imperiousness accompanies their orders, or when passion has raised a jealousy of their aversion towards us; in these and many other unlucky circumstances, pride prompts us to rebellion, and is ingenious in finding arguments for disputing their power. And this is not only the case of subjects in regard of magistrates and higher powers, but likewife of religious and private families, and is the gate, by which the devil, who first became miferable by pride and disobedience, brings confusion into the best-ordered confligutions; and from inconfiderable and un-fulpected beginnings railes intentibly such divisions, as draw infinite numbers into the partnership of his misery.

But whatever the difficulties of obedience be, God still commands us to be obedient, and we have no other way of ascending to him, but by the strict observance of this duty; the difficulties therefore of it are not to be our dispensation; for since Christ became obedient even to death, and, as S. Bernard

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laid down his life, that he might not be wanting in his obedience, he ought to be our example amidst the daily difficulties, which discourage us; and he having given us the inftruction, that we ought rather to forfeit our life than our obedience, how must we conclude it our much greater obligation to part with our pride, our humour, and our interest, rather than refuse obedience where he has commanded us to obey? This point admits of no dispute; for certainly these our inclinations, which of themselves are evil, can never be a good plea against duty; and if in favour of them, or by the violence of their impression, we quit the obligation God has laid upon us, we, for the time, renounce all the hopes he has given us of ascending with Christ.

Hence all, that undertake here to be the followers of Christ, see the necessity of not departing from his steps. If they are sensible, who have power over them, they cannot but hence know, it is their duty to be obedient to them; and this for conscience sake, because it is the will of God it should be so; and they can no other way hope to be obedient to God, if they obey not those, who have authority over them. And this is not only to be when they act the part of

friends more than of superiors, and com-mand in such a moderate way, as to sweeten all their commands with mildness, and make obedience grateful; but also when the dif-agreeableness of their haughty, passionate, or waspish temper alienates all affection from them, and provokes to contradiction, stub-bornness, or rebellion. Here in these circumstances is the proper trial of obedience; and in these our most industrious endeavours must be to suppress all those motions, which incline us to rebel, and without any expressions or dislike, to bow down to God in the superior, and with the same cheerfulness, accept his commands, as if not he, but God, only were there. This is the obedience according to the spirit of Christ; and if servants, minors, and others in subjection, were but sensible, of the great advantage they might make, by readily obeying in these ungrateful circumstances, they would not to easily permit passion to prevail, and make them their losers, where the

opportunity of gain is so great we ald The gain that might be, are many degrees of ascending towards God by virtue of abedience, and there the more confiderable sthe more difficulties there are in performing it. For when we do any thing in obedience to the commands of another, we gain formuch

upon our own will, by this subjection to another's; and if we continue this obedience even where lill humour, jealoufies, and refentments, with strong arguments, diswade from it; here is in this fuch a victory over our lown will, that their cannot be apprehended much danger from it in any other cafe, which was thus governable in this Hence the wife man fays; Vir abediens loquetur victorias) The obedient man will speak wichos ries. Pro. xxi. 28. Because where the will is subjects there must be triumphs over hell; whilst felf-will, not governed, is that alone which brings captive fouls into that place of torments. This then is a great step towards God, fince a christian, that has his own will under him, is in this raifed above hims felf, and all that is earthly.

Another step is, that obedience, divesting us of our own wills substitutes God's will in the place, by which we come to be directed and governed, not by our own will, which is corrupt, but by the will of God, which is holy. For whether we obey God immediately in observing his precepts, or obey those, to whom we are subject, we still do the will of God, whose will it is we should thus obey. And what nearer approach can there be to God in this life, than by thus suspending the usurped jurisdic-

tion of our own corruption, and giving the power into the hand of God, with an univerfal fubmiffion tochim? "This is what we daily pray for in these petitions of the Lord's prayer, when we say, Thy kingdom come; thy will be done on earth as it is in beaven : For then our fouls are made the kingdom of God, when not our own, but God's will rules in us. And when is this, but when, confidering the will of God, we are ever zealous to be directed by it, without any regard to those perverse inclinations, which press us to take a contrary way? And while not only masters, and all in power have this way open before them, by feeking in all things the will of God, and doing it; but all in lubjection too, by cheerfully embracing the commands of their fuperiors, as the will of God to them, all are in fuch a way, in which they may trample under foot their own corruption, and afcending with Christ, enter into the participation of his

be That this may be done most effectually, let the conditions be considered, which will render obedience most acceptable to Gode First, It ought to be cheerful and therefore without muniting, without fowerness, or my fights of diffeontent. 2dly, It ought to be pure, in faithfully performing what is C iv

ordered, not for fear, interest, or any human respects, but as considering the will of God, and endeavouring to please him. 3div. It ought to be ready and without delay. of the perion, who commands, either as to birth, learning, capacity, affection, &c. If he be in power, that is enough, to he commands not what is evidently contrary to duty. Lastly, it ought not to be too buly in reasoning upon the motives or ends o the command, nor too nice as to the means of accomplishing it. These are conditions, which belong to a strict obedience, and are fuch, as will generally render obedience valuable with God. But where circumstances are so, as in a married state, where the concern is common, and the duty of obeying is mixed with a duty of preferving what is to be the support of a family: Here may be fometimes reasons for delays to prevent the mischiefs of rath commands, by waiting the feafon of a better humour, wherein to persuade to more considerate resolutions. But while this must be allowed, yet no advantage is to be made of it, in favour of pride, stubbornness, ill-humour, or indifcretion; for this will be to abuse liberty. and to open a door to unhappiness. Charles and the turn of

Having here shewn the way that leads to God, even the way which Christ both by doctrine and example has taught us, and a way open to all; grant, O Jesus, who art our powerful advocate with the Father, that we may follow thee in thy own way. Obtain for us that grace, by which we may master all that pride, stubbornness, and self-conceit, which make us fond of our own thoughts and ways, that being disengaged from these unhappy bonds, we may become sincerely obedient to thy precepts, and to all those, to whom we are subject, and be thus in preparation of alcending with thee; and by doing the will of God on earth, may enter into a more perfect union with him in heaven.



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double railrustion to all the faithful. First. T. Mouseus San Days of Assentian Madaus.

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HE Apostles having seen Christ ascend ing to his heavenly Eather from the top of Mount Oliver, and standing with their eyes fixt on that cloud, which had appear to them for fettling their disturbed uninds, divided by the violence of two extremes, of joy for their master's glory, and of grief for their own loss. These angels, with a mild reproof, question them for standing there looking towards heaven, and put them in mind, that Jefus, whom they had feen afcending, would return again in the same manner to judge the world. Upon which the Apostles understanding, that they were not to lose time in fruitless resentments for the absence of their Lord, but apply their whole endeavours in preparing for his fecond coming, forthwith obey the fummons and returning to Jerufalem, there wait the accomplishment of Christ's words, in the Holy Ghoff, the Comforter, whom he had

promised to send them.

This is the first effect of the Ascension of the Son of God upon the Apostles, to render more docide and more obedient to the

roice of cheaven; and curries with it a double instruction to all the faithful: First, To take place of all other feeming and more arrecable exercise. Nothing feems more definable to well disposed souls, than quiet prayer, and yet if the will of God calls another way, they must, with the Apostles looking towards heaven, leave the solitude of the mount, and go to the city, there to aftend whatever more uneafy exercises, Providence has ordained for them. The bent therefore of the most pious inchnations is not to be considered, but the will of God alone, in whatever way it shall manifest iffelf; and no degree of grief is to be indulged, though the present intimation of heaven proves the difappointment of fome more religious design; for that the meanest offices, undertaken by the direction of the Divine Will, are fanctified by this choice, and are more beneficial to the humble foul, than whatever elfe could be performed, though in itself much more perfect, by the choice of the most pious inclination. By this all christians are taught, what ought to be the liberty of their louis; that though we are to be encouraged, to deliberate and make proposals of what may be most for our advantage, and be industrious in pursuing

fuch defigns a yet this ought ever to be with a falve to the Divine Will; so that if God shall permit vans interruption, reroginally difable us, in the profecution, we are with all possible freedom of mind to submit sonot letting our own will be a bar to the execution of God's and industriously giving a check to all kind of previfiness, ill humour or impatience, which are the effect of a rebellious pride and felf-love, which cannot bear contradiction, though from the hand of God, but with expressions of dislike This freedom is the effect of the Divine Spirit working the foul into a fubjection to God, and laying all things of this world upon the level; fo that it readily embraces fickness, temptations, spiritual drynels, interruptions, disappointments, death, Esta with the fame cheerfulness of faith. though not of nature, as other more fenfible comforts ; because the joy of faith is in the accomplishment of the will of God; and wherever this appears, there faith makes no diffinction; it knows its only happiness here is in fulfilling his will, and as this makes all things equally valuable in themselves, fo likewife equally defirable to the foul that leeks not itself, but Godd the rit and The 22

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weakness of faith and the ftrength of nature. But however to much we have derealt, that the power of igrace is above nature, and that many fouls for fulfilling the will of God, have cheerfully embraced all that is ungrateful to nature; that though there be great difficulty in it, were all may be done through God, that comforts usp! IP this be certain, then it is likewife certain, we can have no excuse for all that previsiones, moprofeness, and impatience, which are affected or indulged by us, as often as we meet with disappointments, are thwarted in our prochofalso or put out of dur own way: " We is eithue enatural constitution may incline to thefe diforders; but what then? Is nature a fufficient plea for going out of the way? If this could be allowed, then all finners would be justified. Whence we may be affured, that our weakness ought not to be made our excuse, but our motive, for using all possible h means for overcoming it; and though the entire victory may be the privilege of few, yet that none dan pretend to true plety, who daily experience weakiless in themselves, and do not use means for overcoming it. agains

is, That in all the occasions of grief, they ought to be watchful against every degree of excess: First, For the reason already men-

tioned subcoaufe in tall fuch toccasions a faith difeerns the will of God, and an bumble submission being due to this, immoderate grief cannot be tolerated, which has neither humility nor submission in tit, if nature therefore will not presently yield, yet reason must coand this being once fully sensible of its duty, it will foon use force upon nature, and bring it into subjection to that which is above it. 2dly, For the reason given by the angels to the Apostles; these had as sensible a loss in the departure of their Lord from them, as can possibly happen upon earth; and yet no time is indulged them to grieve the fame, moment which took whim from them, puts them in mind, that he would return again to judge the world, and reu quires them to suspend all grief, and to go and prepare for judgment. The fame is the cafe of all without exception: Whatever their present loss be, which inclines them to grieve, yet they have a much greater loss to apprehend which is the loss of God, and this demands all their care for its prevention, How then can it be reasonable, to give up the foul to grieve for the loss of what must be loft, when fuch grief is not capable of recovering what is already loft, and puts the foul in hazard of lofing that which is eternal? Those who have had any experience

of grief; cannot but besfenfibles of the many mischiefs of it; in putting such a clog upon the foul mas to trender it uncapable of all thate exercises, by which it is to feek God, and prepare for the possession of him; they know heaven can be no part of the concern, while the whole foul and thought looking back upon what is gone, fees nothing before it: And therefore cannot wonder if grief be forbidden to those who are to prepare for judgment. I wish all others would be convinced of it, without the help of their own experience; and upon this conviction, be watchful against all the approaches of this deceitful passion; this steadiness would be a commendation of their reason and faith, for nothing can be more reasonable, than to keep that at a distance, which is most prejudicial to their greatest interest; and nothing more agreeable to faith, than to renounce that injustice, which involves a preference of that, which is now nothing to God himself; and is sullen to all the incom prehensible happiness, which he promises, because the present satisfaction is taken out of its hands to she lot average of

With these two lessons the Apostles are sent from Mount Olivet to Jerusalem, there to wait the coming of the Holy Ghost; and the lessons being given them from heaven,

deavours for the observance of them, in a quiet surrender of ourselves at all times to the disposition of heaven, so as not only to acknowledge in God an over-ruling power, but likewise to acquiesce in this power, in whatever way it shall dispose of us, without sullen grief, or fretful resentments; it cannot be questioned, I say, but that due endeavours for the observance of these lessons will be the most assured argument of our souls being already under the influence of the Holy Spirit, and the most effectual means for obliging him to a more perfect communication, even to come and dwell in our hearts.

But this more especially, if we add the other preparations of the Apostles mentioned in the sirst chapter of the Acts; Who perfevered all in one spirit in prayer, v. 14. All in one spirit, and all in prayer: In this manner were they waiting, whom God designed to fill with the first fruits of the Holy Ghost; we cannot have a better model, than this which stands recorded in the word of God, for our instruction. And since, now the time approaches, when we are to renew the memory of the Holy Ghost descending upon the Apostles, and we cannot but be convinced through the sad effects of

our own weakness, how much we stand in need of being strengthened by his Holy Spirit; what can we do better than prepare our hearts in the lame manner as the Apostles did, that so with them, we may have the Holy Ghost poured forth in our hearts, there to become our teacher, our

life, and our strength?

The Apostles persevered in prayer; if we expect the fame bleffing with them, we are to ask it in prayer, and not only ask it, but persevere in asking: We are to humble our-selves in the consideration of our manifold weakness, and confessing our only help to be from God, solicit him to fend forth his Holy Spirit upon us, that by him we may be supported amidst all the dangers of life, and be enabled in the performance of those great duties, which he exacts from us; thole duties, which are too great for us, as being above the spirit of man, above the strength of nature, of learning, of wit, and of all human abilities, and can be only the effect of his Holy Spirit abiding in us, and quickening us with a supernatural strength, such as is capable of overcoming the devil and the world, and all that corruption which we have within us. See, christians, what ought to be your employment at this time; not only on this day, but every day, like the Apostles, till the accomplishment of that time, when God sends down his Holy Spirit upon such as shall be then found prepared to receive him? The blessing is of infinite value, and you have so great an interest in it, that it is worth all the preparation you are able to make for it. But then see your prayer be accompanied with charity; disengage your hearts from all malice and anger, remove all dissention, make peace with every neighbour, forgiving every one from your hearts whatever they have done against you, that so your breasts being thus composed, they may become fit bodies for the God of peace.

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Thus, O God, is thy goodness not only fruitful in bleffings, but merciful also in teaching us how to receive the benefit of them; grant that at present we may make advantage of this mercy, and be so truly industrious in preparing our souls; that we may not only celebrate the memory of past mercies, but find them renewed in us, by receiving the Holy Ghost, who may be to us the beginning of a new life: Protect us under all the difficulties of this present, and conduct us to the possession of a better, which shall never end.

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Nothis day, and on the whole Oflave, a principal employment of all christians ought to be in opening their hearts towards heaven, and by fervent prayers and tears importuning God to pour forth his Holy Spirit upon them. Those who cannot perswade themselves to be truly serious in this exercise, have too much grounds to suspect their state; fince to be in want of help, and not to feek it; to be in the way to eternity, and not to be folicitous to prevent a miscarriage, betrays fuch a want of reason and faith, that their needs nothing more to give a christian a dislike of himself, and to make him fear, that whatever he be called, he has no real principles of the Gospel in him. To fend up petitions therefore to heaven, for imploring the communication of the Holy Spirit to us, is what all are obliged to; because in the Holy Ghost is our life, our strength, our light, our comfort, and the general supply of whatever helps are here necessary for us, in order to a better life; and this being the general concern of all, it ought to be the subject of the devotion of all: And those who join not in it, need no other proof of their not being at present what they

ought to be, and that without a great change, they are never like to become the eternal temples of the Holy Ghost, whom they have

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here despised.

This I fay to those who have already received the Holy Ghost in confirmation; but as for those, who have not yet had the benesit of this sacrament, it is not enough for them to pray for the communication of the Holy Spirit; for God, in his mercy, having ordained a more effectual means in the sacrament of confirmation, they cannot well be in earnest in desiring the affistance of the Holy Ghost, if they seek it not in the way, which God has appointed for their more effectual

obtaining it.

Not that confirmation is to be numbered amongst those facraments, without which none can be saved; but it is however such as ought to be omitted by none: For since it is an institution of the Divine Goodness, by which the blessings of heaven are so plentifully communicated to the faithful, there ought to be no negligence in approaching to it; but what has been so mercifully ordained for the sanctification of all, ought with earnessness to be desired by all. Whence Saint Clement, who lived with the Apostles, says; all, without delay, ought to hasten to baptism, and then to be signed by the Bishop;

that is, receive the feven-fold grace of the Holy Gholt; fince he cannot be a perfect christian, who, not by necessity, but carelessy or wilfully neglects this facrament, as we have received it from Bleffed Peter, and the other Apollies have taught, according to the doctrine of Christ. Ep. 4.

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The confideration of the effects of this facrament will excuse all farther arguments on this subject: The first of these is to perfect the grace received in baptism; so that whereas in baptism we become the children of God, in confirmation we receive the strength of men: In baptism we are listed under the standard of Christ, by confirmation we are armed to fight: In baptilm we are regenerated to life, by confirma-tion we are strengthened to battle; we are delivered from the tenderness of infants, and fitted to engage with the devil, the world and the flesh, and to confess the name of our Lord Jesus Christ amidst the terrors of the severest persecution, even of racks and death. is the effect of this facrament described by the primitive bishop and martyr Melchiades. Ep. ad Ep. Hifp. c. 2. And the first proof of it was feen in the Apostles; who were so fearful in the time of Christ's passion, as to run away and leave him in the hands of the Jews; and after his ascension, had not courage to appear in public, but remained that up for fear of the Jews; and yet when the Holy Ghost had descended upon them at Rentecost, they were so animated by this Spirit, that they preached the Gospel both to the Jews and Gentiles, and were so little apprehensive of suffering, that what hitherto they had seared, was now become the subject of their glory; and they went away from the council rejoicing, that they were esteemed worthy to suffer for the name of Christ, Acts v. 41.

Besides this there is another essect, which is that of imprinting a character in the soul, which ever abides in it, as a mark of its having been consecrated to the warfare of Christ: This is, as it were, a seal of the covenant made with God; and of this the Apostle seems to speak, when he says, God has sealed us, 2 Cor. i. 22: And this being unchangeable, hence the sacrament of confirmation can never be received by any person, but once, without violence to the institution.

Having touched at the effects of this facrament, we must hint at other particulars belonging to it for the information of those who are to prepare for it: And first, That it is administered by a Bishop: 2dly, That the manner in which he administers it, is by the imposition of hands, upon those who are to

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be confirmed, and making the fign of the cross on their foreheads with blessed oil or chrism, saying these words, I sign thee with the sign of the cross, I confirm thee with the chrism of salvation, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and the Holy Ghost.

There is no other action mentioned in scripture, besides the imposition of hands; but it having been the practice of the primitive church to anoint with chrism, such as were to be confirmed, as is delivered both by the sathers and councils, it cannot be questioned, but so it was ordered by Christ, and taught by the Apostles; and thus it is expressly declared by the Ancient Bishop and Martyr Saint Fabian, and by Saint Dionysius, who lived in the time of the Apostles, and by others.

By this chrism is signified the effects of confirmation, as by water is signified the effect of baptism; for as water represents the cleaning of the soul to the recovery of innocence; so in the chrism, which is compounded of oil and balm, the oil which slows and spreads itself expresses the sulness of grace which by the Holy Ghost is poured forth from Christ the Head upon his members; whence not only Christ, but likewise such his members as are distinguished by a particular effusion of grace, are called, The

is of a fweet perfume, and a great preservative against corruption; and in this is represented the grace of confirmation, which strengthens the minds of the faithful against the contagion of vice, and so prepares them for a good life, that abounding in good works, they may daily offer a sweet oblation to the Lord, and say with the Apostle, We are to God a sweet savour of Christ, 2 Cor-

to be confirmed, as is delicered both to nois

With this chrism is made the fign of the crofs on the forehead; and this fignifies, that the person confirmed is listed a soldier of Christ crucified, and that he ought not to be ashamed of the cross, nor of the reproaches, contempts and perfecutions belonging to it. He is likewise struck by the Bishop on the cheek to put him in mind, that being now confirmed, he ought to be prepared to receive blows, and with courage, bear all kind of persecution for Christ's fake. After this the Bishop gives him the blessing of peace to remind him, that the grace of the Holy Ghost is the christian's peace, and that he is to feek no peace, but what is to be the fruit of war, not in yielding to the proposals of his fpiritual enemies, but overcome them.

This is the manner of administring this facrament, and these the effects of it: But

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then all those, who defire to partake of this fulness of grace, ought to remember, that their fouls ought to be duly prepared for it; First, By a true repentance, and an humble confession of their fins; because where innocence has been loft by fin, nothing but repentance can prepare fuch a foul, for becoming the temple of the Holy Ghost. adly, It must be advisable to add fasting, alms, prayer, and other good works, that fo this work, which can be done but once. may be done well, and fuch effectual grace be received, as may ferve for life, and be an establishment under all the weakness of it. The church does not absolutely require, that this Sacrament should be received fasting; but it is what she advises, as more conformable to the laudable practice of the primitive christians.

All are capable of this facrament, who have been baptised: But the proper time is not till after the use of reason; hence at twelve years old it is a convenient age, and not before seven; because, before this age children are not capable of sighting the battles of Christ, which is the proper effect of this sacrament. But, however, if there be hazard of being afterwards disappointed, infants at any age, after baptism, may commendably be admitted to it. A Godfather

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is here required as in baptism, that by his instruction the party confirmed may be informed of the best way of engaging with his enemy, and being victorious over him; and likewise, by his charity, be reproved, if he abandons the interest of Christ, and takes part with his adversary. Whence such a person is to be chosen for Godsather, who seems qualified for discharging this twofold duty, which he undertakes, and is most

likely to do it.

Hitherto as to those, who are not yet confirmed, but now let those, who have received the benefit of this facrament, confider how far they manifest the grace of it in their lives, and fatisfy the obligation they then undertook: Weakness cowardice in persons not confirmed, is nothing furprifing; but it is wholly difagreeable, and without excuse, in such as have been confirmed under the hands of the Bishop. For do not they there undertake to be the foldiers of Christ? Do not they there engage in his cause, and, in effect, promise not to forfake it, upon any motives of fear or shame, of interest or pleasure? Do not they there offer themselves to whatever difficulties occur; and is not their profession, rather to embrace death with all its terrors. than prove traitors to their God, or any

ways be faithless to him? This is the profellion, this the christian bravery of as many as are confirmed: And do all live up to this profession? O my God, how could I wish it were so! But, alas! is it not too evident, that not only the feverity of perfecution, but likewise a compliance with the world, respect to company, the apprehension of reproach, a word of contempt, every ordinary affliction make these give way, and too often, wholly quit their post; so that those, whose duty it is, rather to die, than offend against God, shrink under the least inconveniences, wait not for tyrants to try their courage, but fall before trifles.

And how far am I of this number? O God, I must acknowledge my weaknesses to be general; and I cannot but blush, when I think of fo much cowardice joined with the profession of a foldier. Grant me now, I befeech thee, a better spirit; grant I may have ever before my eyes, the profession I have made, that such meekness and patience and courage may be daily found in me, as becomes one who has been confirmed a disciple of the cross. Come, O Holy Ghost, and take a new possession of my heart; enter this day into my foul, and abide there for ever, my Light, my Guide, and my Strength, and a land on the state of the

MONDAY in Whitfun-Week.

Having implored this day the affiftance of the Holy Ghost, according to our necessities, and the obligation of this holy time, there is still one petition, which ought to be presented to Almighty God, belonging in a particular manner to this sestival. This petition is one part of the collect of the Holy Ghost, where the church thus prays; Da nobis in eodem spiritu recta sapere: Grant, that by the same spirit, we may relish the things that are good: And this I earnestly recommend to all; because on the grant of this petition very much depends that excellent disposition of soul, which prepares us for satisfying the whole law of God, and will, in a great measure, facilitate our salvation.

Those who observe the steps to all sinful and scandalous disorders, cannot but see, that the very first is from that unhappy inclination, which we have to evil, by which the things that are displeasing to God, are most grateful to us, and what he commands, are the general objects of our aversion. From this root springs all that is sinful; whilst following the bent of our corrupt nature, we are forward in pleasing ourselves,

to the displeasure of God, and thus quite forfake the way of falvation. And what is the fum of this, but that we relish the things that are evil, and not those that are good? Hence must we date all the sinful misfortunes of the world. If church-men or religious neglest the duties of their state, and by the irregularities of idleness or ambition, dishonour their character, it is because they relish not the proper exercises of their function; the labour, the retirement, the reservedness, the humility of their profession, have no grateful taste in them; and that alone, which pleases, is an indulgence of nature in Soth, Sleep, and ease, unprofitable conversation, entertainments, idle company, or the applause of the world. If the husband neglects his family, and exposes that to ruin, which is his duty to preserve; is it not, because he has a dislike to discipline and business, and can find no relish, but in drinking, gaming, expensive satisfactions, or extravagance? If the wife leaves her house to disorder, and becomes remarkable for her expensive or undisciplined life; is it not because there is nothing grateful in the obligations of her state, moderation pleases not, and care is her aversion; Is is not, because there is something sweet in what is irregular, vanity has it its charms, and the entertainments of idleness in all its varie-

ties is what she admires? If youth be ungovernable and extravagant; is it not because there is fomething mortifying in order, feriousness, and labour, and there is no relish but of what is vain, rash, or disorderly? If fervants prove idle or faithless to their trust; is it not because a zealous discharge of their duty has no favour in it; and it is more agreeable to comply with their own flothful or goffiping humour? If vice and wickednels have disfigured a great part of the chriftian world, and brought the professors of the Gospel to the resemblance of beasts; the occasion is, because there is not a relish in christian souls of what is good; nothing delights but what is corrupt; and hence being invited by what pleases, they are drawn by degrees into all that is extravagant.

If this be a true genealogy of vice, then the church has reason to put this petition into the mouths of the faithful, Da nobis in eodem spiritu recta sapere; Grant us in the same spirit, to relish the things that are good. That so from this better disposition, the effect of the Holy Ghost, they may find an agreeableness in the things that God demands of them, and by this be led with satisfaction

through every duty.

To pray then, that we may, Recta sapere, Relish the things that are good; is to befeech

God, that by the virtue of the Holy Ghost, we may all find an inward bent in our fouls inclining us, as with a kind of weight, to the obligations of our respective states; that our particular duties may have fomething agreeable in them, fuch as may invite us fweetly, fuch as may raise in us a defire of complying with them, and tolerate no rest within us, till we have faithfully discharged what we know, is incumbent on us. It is to defire of God that we may delight in our duty, that this delight may be accompanied with an aversion to every thing that becomes us not; that we be uneasy under the delays and hinderance of our obligation; that fhame and confusion follow us, as often as we are out of our business, in whatever is disagreeable to our station.

Oh, how beautiful would thy gates be, O Sion, how pleasing would all thy streets be, O Jerusalem, O church of God, were all thy inhabitants, all faithful souls influenced by this Holy Spirit! What a harmony would it be, delightful to God and the whole court of heaven, to see every living member of the church, busy in their proper function, cheerfully performing their duty, and taking pleasure in the ways of our Lord! O God, when wilt thou grant this petition, that we may relish the things that are good, and de-

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light in those ways to which thou hast called us? When wilt thou unbend our crooked nature, and semove that perverseness of our wills, which inclines us to all that is corrupt, and turns us from the ways of thy commandments? This it is we ask of thee this day, this is the subject of our petition. Da nobis in eodem spiritu recta sapere. Thou hast sent forth thy Holy Spirit upon thy church; grant now, that it may be plentifully poured forth upon us, that in the virtue of the same Holy Spirit, we may relish and delight in

the things that are good.

And can then these vessels of corruption be thus transformed and become vessels of honour? Can we ever hope to fee the violence of our daily passions succeeded by uniform defires of good? This cannot be the work of human power; but of grace it may be, which is able to force nature against its own fireams. Hearken to the royal prophet; there was a time when he felt the weight of corruption, so as to fall under it into the displeasure of God; and yet this power of fin was overcome by a greater power of grace; the affections of his heart are purified, he defires not the fatisfactions of nature, but he has a thirst upon his foul, a thirst after God and his law. Concupivit anima mea desiderare justificatione tuas. Bonum mibi lex

oris tui, super millia auri & argenti. Sitivit anima mea Dominum. My foul is earnest in. the defire of thy precepts, O Lord: The law of thy mouth is better to me than treafures of filver and gold: My foul thirsts after my God: In these and infinite other expressions does this prophet manifest the merciful power of God upon him, in taking from his heart the tafte of all periffing goods, and giving him fuch a relish of the fervice of God and his duty, that now the most grateful attractives of earth had no tafte in them, in comparison of this. And does not S. Paul express the same, who declares himself dead to this world, and fighs for his deliverance; who reputes the most valuable goods of this life as contemptible dung, so he may but gain Christ? The same we find in many others: It is plain then, that whatever our corruption be, it is subject to the power of grace, and that by this our hearts may be fo changed as to lofe the fenfe of all earthly charms, and find none, but what belong to duty and eternal goods.

But if it may be, why is it not so with us? Is not God willing to help us into the way of salvation? Is not his Holy Spirit ready to give us this new life? God is certainly willing, and his Holy Spirit ready: But let us consider; do such inestimable blessings re-

quire nothing on our part? Is one Da nobis, Grant us, enough to prepare our hearts an abode for the Holy Ghost? Were this one petition poured forth from a heart thirsting after a new life, it might prevail with God, who regards the fincerity, and not the length of prayers: But how can we expect a new spirit to come and take possession of our hearts, who are not willing to quit the old one? Whilst our whole delight is in such ways, as our corruption fuggests, such as are either directly finful, or leading to fin, by being injurious to the obligations of our ftate; whilst our delight is here, whilst this is daily encouraged, and we as industriously promote it, as if not a present satisfaction, but heaven depended on it; what can a cold Da nobis do, for preparing the heart for God? S. Gregory informs us of the little. hopes we have: Nemo receptaculum Spiritus Sancti efficitur, nisi Spiritu suo primitus evacuetur. None can receive the Holy Spirit of God, who has not at first cast forth his own spirit. Christians, if this be so, then see, what you have to do, while you ask for the Holy Ghost; see and take pains in it, for it is in vain to ask, that by the Spirit of God we may relish the things that are good, if we do not observe all the undue satisfactions of our own corrupt spirit, and so steadily strive

against them, as to put our proper will into the subjection of grace. Such must be our endeavours, and, by such alone, can we expect success in the petition of this day. Grant therefore, O God of mercy, we may in earnest pursue this work; that having disengaged ourselves from the violence of our own evil spirit, we may be possessed by thine, and by virtue of the same Spirit relish the things that are good.



Tuesday in Whitfun-Week.

N this festival of the Holy Ghost, in whose descent was the accomplishment of the new law, every christian ought to seek his establishment in it; for this must be the effect of the Holy Ghoft, as well in us, as it was in the Apostles. By the power of God the Father we were created, by the mercy of God the Son we have been redeemed, and by the virtue of the Holy Ghost is to be compleated in as whatever mercies we have received, by a more perfect fanctification. This is to be the effect of that grace, which from him, as from the treasure of infinite goodness is to be poured forth into our hearts, and this grace being manifold, according to the multiplicity of our wants, we cannot have a more proper subject of our confideration this day, than to fee what is these graces are, commonly known by the gifts of the Holy Ghost, that from hence we may know the remedies of our necessities, and from whom to ask them.

One infirmity we have in misplacing our fear, both in being too apprehensive of the evils of this life, and letting the fear of God run into despair or dejection; so that the foul being miferably racked and spent with this passion, it is not capable of performing any one duty to God with life or attention. This manifold evil has no remedy, but in that better fear, which is the gift of the Holy Ghost; by which the foul regards God so awful in majesty, so adorable in his mercy and love, that though she be averse to the evils of this life, yet that which above all the fears is the displeasure of God; and yet this fear is so tempered, that it destroys not the quiet of love, but is the effect of it, and therefore with steadiness passes by the terrors of imagination, as the vanity of dreams, and only there starts, when it discovers the real breach of God's law before it. This holy fear is the remedy of fo many evils, the effects of that fear, which is nothing but passion and weakness in us, that all have reason to pray for it, that so the fear of this world may be delivered from all excess, and the fear of God from indifcretion.

A fecond infirmity we have in being too folicitous for what belongs to this world, and too indifferent in whatever is for our eternal interest; so that, while we seek the world, we have an eagerness upon us, which excludes all other thoughts: But when we seek heaven, we are cold and tepid, and the little concern we have for it, makes us easy in omitting or interrupting it, and opens our

hearts to whatever other thoughts occur. Piety is the remedy of this evil, which inspiring us with devotion and zeal, makes us earnest in all the concerns of eternity, fervent in prayer, forward in encouraging what is for God's honour, and solicitous for reforming whatever is dishourable to him, and unbecoming the christian profession. And this piety being the gift of the Holy Ghost; let our own and others corruption inform us, whether we have not reason to pray for it.

A third infirmity we have in the eager purfuit of our own will, and letting this eagerness, propt by custom, education, or interest, hinder us from discerning the will of God: Thus we are too often blind, as to that, which ought to be our rule, and take that for our guide, which certainly leads us out of the way. The remedy of this, is that knowledge, which being the gift of the Holy Ghost, is alone capable of discovering to us the will of God, and giving us fuch strength of understanding, as to discern our duty through all that darkness, which is before us; and let the number of our wilful or affected mistakes now tell us, whether we have reason at this time to ask this knowledge of God.

A fourth infirmity we have in being for eafily diverted from what we know to be

the will of God, and discouraged from the execution of it by felf-love, the love of the world, the love of interest, of pleasure, of company, of friends, of children; fo that there is fcarce any one day or hour of our lives, wherein some immoderate love of creatures, or fear or shame does not defeat in us the strongest resolutions we have of doing the will of God. This weakness is the immoderate occasion of all our fins; and fortitude which is the gift of the Holy Ghost, being the only remedy, by which we come to a greater strength and firmness of mind, fo as to stand against all temptations; let our daily weakness inform us, whether we have not reason to ask this fortitude of God.

A fifth infirmity we have in being subject to the snares of the devil; so that, though we have a detestation of him, when he comes with the proposal of bare-faced wickedness; yet we are easily deceived, when he puts on a disguise, and under the cover of innocence or religion, invites us to follow him. By this artistice, how often are we drawn into the most criminal passions, how often surprised in sin? How often do we see schism and rebellion justified, and the violation of all the commandments maintained, without any offence of conscience. The remedy against this weakness, is council, another gift

of the Holy Ghost, by which, as by the help of an interior light, are discovered to us the snares of the devil, and we are ever informed of the dangers that are before us. This is so necessary a help amidst the infinite delusions to which we are exposed, amidst the strong inclinations of a corrupt nature, which finding favour from blindness, make us willing to be deceived, that I think none can be sincere in the defire of salvation, who do not heartily petition the Holy Chost to be their council, by whose advice these infinite deceits may be discovered, and their rain be

prevented by fuch a discovery.

A fixth infirmity we have in the weakness of our reason, which being wounded by fin, cannot comprehend those divine truths, which God proposes to be believed, and yet has that pride joined with its weakness, as to think itself capable of understanding all. Whence it too often undertakes to examine and pronounce of such mysteries as are quite above its reach, and has this punishment of its presumption to adore its own phantoms, which are shadows and dreams for the increated truths of God. The remedy of this evil is in that gift of the Holy Ghost called Understanding, by which we have such a true sense of God, as to know that he and his truths are not the discovery

of curiofity or disputes, but to be revealed by him, and to be received as they have been delivered, without setting up any court within ourselves to enquire and make judgment of them. Where reason is not thus humbled and convinced, it must necessarily be surprised with variety of errors; and then let those, who can but comprehend the pride of such errors, and the danger of being obstinate against the truths of God, consider whether there be not reason to ask this un-

understanding of him.

A seventh infirmity we have in neglecting the daily opportunities of salvation, and there seeking some private interest, or the satisfaction of pleasing ourselves, where with good management we might have made a sacrifice to God, and laid up treasures in heaven. This is a general indiscretion, both in the ill use of time and money, and in whatever we have to do or suffer, still forgetting eternity, and seldom looking beyond ourselves. The remedy of this, is this wisdom, which is the gift of the Holy Ghost, by which we are taught to make the best of every thing, seeking God in all things, and ordering all our life to the glory of God, and the purchase of eternal happiness. This is so much every one's interest, that there is

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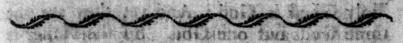
no need of putting any in mind of the reafon they have to ask this wisdom of God.

Here we have a short view of our necessities, and their remedies. Do thou, O God, grant all thy faithful a due sense of both, that in this time of mercy they may find the good effects of it in their souls, and by these gifts of thy Holy Spirit be established against the assaults of all evil spirits, and make the Gospel, which they profess, the rule of their lives.

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TRINITY SUNDAY

N this festival, facred to the blessed Trinity, and at this time, when the prefumption of weakness attempts to bring this incomprehensible mystery to the level of imagination, we cannot do better than recollect what orthodox faith teaches, and oppose against this rashness the doctrine of the church as delivered in S. Athanasius's creed. In this then we are taught, that the catholic faith is this, that we worship one God in Trinity, and Trinity in unity: Neither confounding the persons, nor dividing the fubstance. For there is one person of the Father, another of the Son, and another of the Holy Ghost. But the divinity of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, is one; the glory equal, the majesty co-eternal. Such as the Father is, fuch is the Son, fuch is the Holy Ghost. The Father uncreated, the Son uncreated, the Holy Ghost uncreated. The Father eternal, the Son eternal, the Holy Ghost eternal: And yet they are not three eternals, but one eternal. So likewise the Father is almighty, the Son almighty, the Holy Ghost almighty: And yet not three almighties, but one almighty. So the Father is God, the Son is God, the Holy Ghost is God: And yet they are not three Gods but one God. So the Father is God, the Son is God, the Holy Ghost is God: And yet there are not three Gods. but one God. So the Father is Lord, the Son is Lord, the Holy Ghost is Lord: And yet not three Lords, but one Lord. For as we are compelled by the christian truth to acknowledge every person by himself to be God and Lord; so we are forbidden by the catholic religion to fay, There are three Gods, or three Lords. The Father is made of none, neither created nor begotten. The Son is of the Father alone, not made nor created, but begotten. The Holy Ghost is of the Father, and of the Son, not made nor created, nor begotten, but proceeding. There is therefore one Father, not three Fathers: One Son, not three Sons: One Holy Ghoft, not three Holy Ghofts. And in this Trinity nothing before or after other, none greater or less than other: But all the three persons are co-eternal and co-equal. So that in all things, as has been faid above, both unity in Trinity, and Trinity in unity, is to be worshipped.

By this profession is to be regulated the faith of this mystery; it was composed in the first ages of the christian church, when Arius, with his numerous and powerful

followers, had with equal heat and impiety opposed this article of the catholic faith, as it had been taught by the Apostles, and delivered down by the pastors of the church; who, to fatisfy the charge given them by Christ and his Holy Spirit, Of taking care of the flock, affembled in the first general council of Nice, and there published the faith of this mystery, as it had been received, and fetting a mark upon Arius, as a wolf that defigned to devour the flock, prevented the growth of his impiety at that time, and by pronouncing Anathema against him, left a rule by which all succeeding ages might be secured against his detestable errors. In conformity to the declaration of the Nicene fathers was this profession made, and has been ever fince used by the catholic church, as the standard by which the orthodox christians, as to this point, have been diftinguished from the abettors of herefy.

As the faith of this mystery has been delivered, so it is to be received by all. Human reason is not to usurp here any authority of enquiring or judging how far it is conformable to the principles of reason, much less of excepting against it, upon any pretended evidence of being contrary to such principles. In mysteries of faith, reason has no more to do, than to enquire into the authority that delivers them, and upon finding this to be legitimate, that is, to be the authority ordained by God, and by him qualified for this end, it is obliged to submit; and all search, after this, into the reasonableness of them, is seldom better, than the effect of unprofitable curiosity, and too often of

incredulity. de to that has wifleful and

They who understand not this, know not what faith is, which is not an affent to truths, because we understand them; but because they are proposed to us by an authority, which exacts our credit. And though this may feem a reflection upon reason, thus to receive truths of which it comprehends nothing; yet this again can be only with those who understand not what reason is: For certainly, it is as much an act of reason to submit, when there is reason for it, as it is to conclude with certainty. when there is an evidence from natural principles. Does he not act rationally. who, going to fea, fubmits to the judgment of a skilful pilot? Is not the soldier rational, when he fubmits to the orders of his general? And does not he, that is to learn any fecret art or science, act according to the principles of the best reason, when he submits to the direction of his master? And this, though the case should be so, as it may easily happen, that in the pilot's course, or the general's orders, or in the master's direction, there should appear nothing rational; that is, no connection with the end proposed, but rather, in all present appearance contrary to it; yet still is the submission most rational, because of the great considence they have in the sidelity and skill of such persons, whose orders they can even then believe to be rational, when in particular they cannot see so far into them, as to make such a

judgment of them.

Now, if fubmiffion to our fellow creatures be rational, when we are to be directed by them in any mystery, of which we are at present ignorant; it cannot certainly be a reflection upon reason, to submit to God; but it must be most inreasonable, not to fubmit to him; for though we comprehend not what he teaches, and have no infight in the particulars, which he proposes; this is no more, than we often meet, when we are taught by men, and even things, that are human, and yet we submit. And, as for the truths belonging to God, reason cannot be furprifed, in not being able to fee into them; for as it knows God to be infinitely above whatever is created, fo it must expect his truths to be so; and whilst it fees itself daily worsted, even in the most

imperfect creatures, there being formething fo admirable in their composition and nature, that the best philosopher is only a guesser at them; where can be the grounds for fur-prife, if the truths belonging to God, are found to be, what they are called, mysteries

The truths therefore of God being mysterious to human reason, they are not to be learnt, but from himfelf or those, who are by him deputed to teach them; and he being the unerring truth, he not only deferves to be believed, but exacts it from us, so that we cannot belong to him, if we do not believe him; fince by not believing, we disown in him the effential attribute of truth, which is to deny him to be God. To submit therefore to him, in receiving his truths, both from those, whom he has ordained and qualified to teach them, and in the manner in which they are taught, is fo far from being a reflection upon reason, that it is the first principle of reason thus to submit to him, and to receive his truths with a greater assurance of certainty, even without feeing them, than whatever others we have from the supposed evidence of our own knowledge; because the affurance of God's truth is much greater than of human fcience.

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This is the description of faith, we have from Scripture, which is to cast down imaginations or reasonings, and every high thing, that exacts itself against the knowledge of God, and brings into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ, 2 Cor. x. 5. It is the character of it, which we have received from the primitive fathers against those who were too wife in their own conceits: Quid est fides, says S. Augustin; nist credere, quod non wides? What is faith, but to believe what thou feest not? Quod intelligimus aliquid, rationi debemus, quod autem credimus, authoritati, 'Tis from reason that we understand any thing; but from authority that we believe, De util. cred. And S. Hilarius in his books of the Trinity against the Arians; Habet non tam veniani, quam pramium, ignorare quod credis. 'Tis not only pardonable, but meritorious, to believe what thou dost not understand:

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And now fince divine mysteries are not proportioned to human reason, but (that the faith of them may be pure and orthodox) must be received from authority, and so believed, as delivered, though without seeing or knowing them; let it be here considered, whether their method be right, who, upon the proposals of divine mysteries by authority, or reading them upon record, make their own reason the measure of their

truth, and according as they find them to fuit or difagree with their reason, so far, and in that sense, judge them to be believed, as they are proposed, or to be understood in a figurative fenfe, and therefore as they fland in terms, to be no matters of faith. Let this, I lay, be confidered; for the mysteries which God requires us to believe are for far above our reason, that we are not able either to see, know, or understand them, can it be the way to truth, to believe them no farther then we can understand them; to see first, how far they feem rational to us, and then fo far to believe them? This would be a good way, were our reason a good measure of divine truths: but if it be not, then it is certainly taking pains to go out of the way, and for corrupting the truth. Is not a wrong and crooked measure the way to make ill work, fince the nearer it comes to it, the worse it is? If one should rake an oyster-shell for his mould, wherein to east the figure of a man, or a reed, whereby to shape a ship of clay; is it not plain, the framing the clay to such ill-chosen moulds, would never bring it to what is intended, and the stricter exactness would be no shelp to the work? And what better work will that christian make, who labours to shape divine mysteries by his own reason, since

this being not proportioned to them, the pains in bringing them to it, must be to make them unlike what they are; and then how can the faith, fuited to fuch ideas be

according to truth? di bas

Hence, I think, the christian ought to be afraid of letting his curiofity or reason tamper with divine mysteries, since he cannot but fee, this is meddling with what he does not understand, and prefuming to decide what he is no ways capable of judging. Christian faith must be a faith of divine myfleries according to truth; and be only, that has humility of judgment, to receive and believe them, as they are delivered by the authority established by Christ for this end, can have a true faith and believe according to truth. And as for all those, who, distrusting this authority, resolve to depend on their own judgments, and to believe no otherwise of divine mysteries, than as they can model them by their own reason, is it not an evident consequence, that there is prefumption in fuch an undertaking, and that their faith must be as far from truth, as their reason is from being proportioned to fuch mysteries of the whole the war wherefore, christian, if thou hast reason,

and this tells thee, that the mysteries of faith are above thy reason, do not, in the

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first act of thy christianity, proceed so unreasonably, as to subject such mysteries to the examination and decision of reason, which thou confessest is not capable of making a true judgment of them. Rather use thy reason in seeking the authority, which God has established, for teaching these his truths; and then hear with humility and believe; fuch faith being built on the commands and promifes of God, will captivate reason, and not be subject to its mistakes, and having eternal truth for its foundation, cannot fail of truth in what it believes. This is the way, O Bleffed Redeemer, thy goodness has ordained, for delivering us from the rashness of our own judgments; may we with thanksgiving embrace this mercy, and thus believe, as thou hast commanded, without giving reason the liberty of transgressing her bounds, and facrilegiously breaking thy truths.

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CORPUS-CHRISTI-DAY.

E cannot let this folemnity pals without speaking something of the myflery, which is the subject of it; not that I can pretend to clear it to reason, for I know all the mysteries of the Gospel are above it, and that as S. Gregory says, Divina opera-tio, si ratione comprehenditur, non est admira-bilis: There would be nothing wonderful in the works of the Divine Power, if reason comprehended them; but that by considering the undoubted effects of this power, we may reason something upon those arguments, which pretend to set this mystery beyond the bounds of possibility, and by other supposed absurdities, endeavour to invalidate the truth of it. The church therefore teaching, that in the facrament of the Lord's supper is really present the true body and blood of Jesus Christ, and this by the conversion or change of the bread and wine into his body and blood, which change is called by the church transubstantiation.

First, It may be considered, whether there be grounds for supposing this power in God, for effecting this change of the bread and wine into his body and blood. And here,

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as to the fubject of God's power, the Scripture informing us, first, That he turned the rivers of Egypt into blood, Exed. vil. 20, the dust into lice, Exod. viii. 47. Lot's wife into a pillar of falt, Gen. xix. 26. Water into wine, at the marriage of Cana, Jo. il. 9 : adly. That the devil owned this power in Christ, Mat. iv. 3, when he said to him, if thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread 3dly, That God had nower to make all things out of nothing: There feems a necessity of confessing that God has the power of changing one thing into another, as he pleafes: and therefore, that Christ, by his word, by which all things were made, could change the bread and wind into his body and blood. And while we fee if the work of nature every day to change bread and drink into the substance of our body and blood; not changing it into a new body, but into the very same, that had a being before; fo much as this cannot in reason be denied, but that the God of nature may do as much by his word, as nature by its gradual operation; and therefore that the power may be allowed in Christ of changing the bread and wine into his own body and blood, though they had before a thall be after the relucion being.

possible for the body of Christ to be con-

tained whole and entire under the compals. of a piece of bread or wafer. In this matter, there might be reason to urge the impossible. lity, if we speak of the body of Christ, in that gross and corporeal manner of being, in which it was upon earth, and in which fense fome of the disciples seemed to understand it, when they cried out Jo. vi. 61, This is a hand faying, subo can bear it? But if there be another manner of being more perfect and spiritual, such as brings a body to the refemblance of a spirit, then there can be no more difficulty in apprehending a body thus spiritualized, to be contained whole and entire under the compass of a piece of bread, than for a spirit to be present there. Shire shere sraw

Now that there is such a spiritual manner of being, of which a human body is capable by the Divine Power, we may learn from S. Paul, 1 Cor. xv. 53, where speaking of the resurrection, he says, This corruptible body must put on incorruption, and this mortal body must put on immortality. And, of spiritual body, There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body. If then there is a body, and yet incorruptible, immortal and spiritual, and thus all the bodies of the just shall be after the resurrection; let but the body of Christ be conceived thus spiritual;

and then as a spirit requires no extension or greatuels of place for its being, fo neither will the body of Christel And this is not to suppose the body of Christ to be a body and no body; but to confess with S. Paul, that a body, according to the different states, has different manners of being belonging to it; that in its natural state it has the being of nature, and in its supernatural or spiritual flate, a being, like a spirit : And yet the same body in substance still; as it is certain, the fame bodies of the just, which were natural, will be glorified, and become spiritual; the famle as to substance, and different only in the manner of their being. In this fense may be understood those words of Christ, fo. vi. 64, it is the spirit that quickeneth, the flesh profiteth nothing : The words that I speak to you, are spirit and life: That is, the flesh profits the receiver nothing, as in that carnal, corpored manner, in which it is at present; but as it is quickened by the spirit, by which it will become spiritual, so it will profit the receiver: The words I fpeak to you, are to be understood, as giving spirit and life, as rendering my body spiritual, and giving life and spirit to him that receives it. The sound

By keeping close to this thought several other dissiduties may be solved relating to this subject. For Christ's body being in the

facrament, according to this perfect manner of being, even like a fpirit, it may be apprehended how the facrament may be broken without injuring or breaking his body: As when a man's body is broken or a limb cut off, the foul remains ftill entire; because it is a spirit, and not subject to such accidents as these. Thus likewise may it be conceived, how the body of Christ may be whole and entire in every part of the facrament, after the facred boft is divided : as also how it may be in many places at once: For though we cannot easily understand this possible to a body extended, and in its corporeal manner of being; there is no fuch difficulty in relation to a fpirit, or other thing, in its manner of being like a spirit. because a spirit has no dependence on place? nor is confined either to it or by its

But Christ, at the time of the confecration, having an extended body, and not thus spiritualised, if his same body was really in the facrament, it must be there in the same corporeal manner, as he then was sitting at table; and this overthrows the whole system. This need not be supposed, and it cannot be proved; because there is no necessary connexion between Christ's body and the manner of its being; and therefore though Christ's body at the table was extended yet the fame body in reality and fabliance might be prefent in the factamental fpecies, and not in the fathe manner of extenfion. For though he fald, This is my body, he did not say, My body is here in the same manner, as at the table. That corporeal manner of its being was wholly subject to his Divine Power; so that by this power, he could either divert himself of it, of comtinue it, as by a natural power he could the clothes he then wore: And he fo did in fact, as the holy fathers declare, when he was born without injury to his mother's virginal words, This is my body, there was no necesfity of his body being present in the faceament, with the fame habit, which he work at the table; so neither with the same corporeal extension, which by his Divine Power was equally separable from himmas bhis

fible for the body and blood of Christ to be really present under the sacramental species of bread and wine, since after consecration, our sense, our eyes and taste tell us, the Eucharist is still bread and wine. The possibility of this seems evident from other instances of fact; as of the Holy Chost, which at Christ's baptism, descended in a

hodily shape like a dove supon bim. Luks iii. Range And in the Angel which Mary Magden len faw at the fepulchre, as a young man clothed in a long white robe, Mar. xvi. Here it is plain, that an angel in one cale, and the divine substance of the Holy Chost in the other, were really prefent under the same species or appearance of created things; and that, while the fenfes gave information of those objects present, being a dove and a young man, there was no more, than the appearances of fuch objects, and the Holy Ghoft, and an Angel were really prefent under them. Now if an Angel may be substantially present, under the species of a young man, and the Holy Ghoft, under the species of a dove, must it not be concluded possible to the Divine Power, that Christ may be really prefent under the species of bread equally reparable from hisoning bus

But are not the senses then deceived lolf they are, or are not, it is no more in this last case of the Eucharist, than in the former and those being matters of fact, let the philosopher reconcile them with the senses, as he sees reason, the faith of a christian needs not be concerned in that. But however to be advocate once for the senses; it may be easily granted, that the senses are not deceived; for in all these cases the eyes

make a true report of the colour and form, that appear in the objects before them; the ears of the found; the palate of the tafte; here is no mistake.

Where then is the mistake i It may easily be in the judgment, which, if it concludes too haltily, or from the information of that fense, which is not sufficient evidence in the case, may easily be overseen; and a thing so very common can be no matter of furprife, whilst every day brings fresh instances of lour making wrong judgments of the things, we fee, hear, and tafte. All the eyes we have are not fufficient for making a true judgment of ten thousand compounds of art, nor our tafte in many things of eating and drinking, especially where art has been concerned in them. In these, and infinite other cases, we may judge wrong of what we fee, tafte and feel: because the fenses are not sufficient in many cases to direct our judgment, and fire will be rath if we pronounce upon their information. And yet let the fense, which is proper, make its report, and a right judge ment may hence be framed; let but the ears give an account of what the knowing and candid artift fays, and this will fecure the judgment from all millakes. In the winos viuta

If it be thus in many things purely natural, and much more in things of art; that we

cannot judgetaright of them but by what is heard from the artist; this may be very well expedied and allowed in things, that are the subject of a supernatural and miraculous power; fo that while the eyes inform what they fee, the palate what it taftes, & weithe judgment cannot be excused from rashness, ibit, upon these, forthwith pronounces, and does not wait and attend to what is heard from him, who is the author of fuch a miraculous work. As therefore in the Holy Ghost descending, the eyes of the beholders giving an exact account of the colour, form and manner of it, they could by this judge what it refembled, but could not truly judge what it really was, till they had been informed from God, because it was the effect of his extraordinary power; fo in the Eucharist; being the subject of like wonderful power, after the report of the eyes and tafte, nit is God must tell, what it really is, and from hearing his information is to be framed a true judgment of it, and from this judgment a true faith; and fo S. Paul fays, that faith comes by hearing.

mysteries, while, we confess, we cannot truly comprehend them. But, without comprehending, we know our faith to be right,

sw ted that to equipped in stom some new

while we captivate our reason to what they teachest. It is the effect of thy infinite goodness, that thou art pleased to teach us; and it must be the effect of infinite blindness and perverseness in us to confide more in our reasoning, than in thee. Deliver me, O God, from this blindness, and may my reason be ever subject to thee are no og ment sentiments.

And End, Whether the Rucharist being called bread in Scripture, even after confecration, be a furtherent argument for believing that it is nothing but bread, and not the body of Chieft, We mult confed this would be a fundicie de the for to believing had we afterence of their Con to the perience, that there are nords for longitive, but what are to be understood in their fireful or proper fignification; but fince the contraty is to evident, as to be acknowledged by all that read it, it multiple like ed acknowledged, that though this may be taken up at an objection, vet to the is not proof or evidence in it. It is need to multiply inflances; let these two enough; that Aanon's fernetit is that a Real, wind wilder to range to had a business from a rod into a ferpent; And the Angel at the

while we estained our scalon to what they teached. It is the effect of the infinite goodness system of our must be the country and it must be transplayed and it must be transplayed and more in our and pervertencies in us to count emore in our

THE festival of the B. Eucharist being still continued, we cannot do better than go on at present with the subject of this solemnity, and consider other difficulties, that occur in it, besides those, which have

been already proposed.

And First, Whether the Eucharist being called bread in Scripture, even after confecration, be a fufficient argument for believing that it is nothing but bread, and not the body of Christ. We must confess this would be a fufficient motive for fo believing. had we affurance either from God, or experience, that there are no words in scripture. but what are to be understood in their literal or proper fignification; but fince the contrary is fo evident, as to be acknowledged by all that read it, it must be likewise acknowledged, that though this may be taken up as an objection, yet there is no proof or evidence in it. It is needless to multiply instances; let these two be enough: that Aaron's ferpent is called a Rod, Exod. vii. 12; because it had been changed from a rod into a serpent: And the Angel at the fepulchre is called a young man, Marrixvi.
5; because in outward appearance he refembled a young man. Thus may the sacrament of Christ's body be called bread, because the conversion is from bread, and it is bread in appearance; but it is no more a proof of its being bread, than that the serpent was a rod, or the Angel a young man, because they are so called in scripture.

The like return must be made to those, who bring several instances of Holy Writ where this word is can import no more, than signifies, and therefore, that when Christ says, this is my body, the meaning of it can be no more than this signifies my body; for there can be no proof in this, except the rule were general; that in Holy Scripture, whatever is expressed by this word in

For if this be not so, as certainly it is not, but that the word is sometimes taken one way, and sometimes another, what weight can there be in this objection, for invalidating a doctrine received, or breaking the peace of a church? And what more weight is there in shewing that some words in the

must be understood for no more than figuifies?

form of confectation, are to be understood figuratively; as the cup mentioned for the wine? If it were first proved, that in whatever sentence there is any one word used

figuratively, there of course the whole sentence must be taken, then it would prove fomething; but since this supposition of inference must necessarily confound all scripture, therefore it cannot pass here, as sufficient for the regulating of faith.

faying, Do this in remembrance of me, be a proof, that the facrament is only a figure. But this it cannot be, fince Christ's body and blood in the facrament is a more lively remembrance of Christ's dying on the cross, than any bread can be: As the blood of a martyr preserved, is the best remembrance of his martyrdom: And manna kept in the ark, the best memorial of the manna coming from heaven for the food of the Ifraelites.

offered to Christ, in supposition of this doctrine, as in being eaten by rats or mice, be a sufficient exception against the truth of it. But if it were, would it not likewise be an exception against his passion; when his blood being shed at the pillar and cross, it was subject not only to the possibility of the same indignity, but to a much greater in sach in being trampled on by the vikest of men, ministers of the devil? And much greater was that, when received by Judas, at the last supper, into a treacherous breast, and

by as many ever fince as have unworthily approached to him. But these are the incomprehensible condescendencies of his mercy which ought to excite our love, rather than our scandal; and if this should be a motive of not believing, it is only in those, where the excess of his goodness is above their faith, as to the Years and Gentiles, to whom Christ's hamility was scandal and folly as a soul and

Well, but in all this there is fill no proof of this doctrine. It is true, for we have hitherto only looked into fome usual exceptions made against it. But if the account of these be rational. To as to clear this one point, that they are not evident proof against the doctrine of the real prefence, fufficient with reasonable and unbiassed men to overthrow it; then believe me, it goes a great way towards the proving it. For the doctrine of the church must stand as good, till there be clear and certain proof of the contrary; and without such proof, it cannot be justified according to conscience, or the rule of any court of judicative, to break the peace of the church, and depart from its doctrine. And this is what we have at prefent more particularly to confider, whether the objections against the real presence are so much more certain and clear than the proofs for it, as to oblige either in conscience, or any law, unbiassed: persons to departs from the communion of that church which teaches its real blood of the condenses of his meaning.

First, Then as to scripture; the grounds there for believing the real prefence are, First, The words of Christ at the institution; This is my body, which is given for you; this is my blood; repeated by three Evangelists in the fame express terms, and again by Si Paul, 2 Cor. xi. 24, who adds, He who eats and drinks unworthily, eats and drinks damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's bady, w. 29, and v. 27, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord, 2dly, The words of Christin S. John, c. vi. 51, I am the diving bread which came down from heaven : If any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever: And the bread, that I will give, is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world. The Jews therefore strove amongst themselves, faying; bow can this man give us his flesh to oat? Then Jefus said to them; werily verily It say to you; except you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you shall have no life in you. Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood, has eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day, For my flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed. He that eats my flesh, and drinks my blood, dwells in me, and Lin bins disciples replying, This is n

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hard faying, who can hear it? He removed not the offence they took at his words, by declaring, he spoke only of bread to be received as a sigure of his body; but first proposed a motive for raising their faith; What and if you shall see the Son of Man ascend up, where he was before? By the faith of his miraculous afcention, preparing for the faith of the mystery he had proposed, and of which they doubted. 2dly, Reproved some of them upon this account, for want of faith. 3dly, Permitted many of them to fall away, and walk no more with him; which we may presume, he would not have done, had there been no more faith required than of bread to be given in remembrance of him. Lastly, Put this test to his Apostles, whether they believed the truth of what he had faid? And received this answer of their faith in his divinity, power, and truth: Lord, thou haft the words of eternal life: We believe and are fure, that thou art Christ, the Son of the living Cod. Is there not in the whole series of this passage fomething flewing, that what Christ here spoke of, was a point hard to be believed; that great faith was necessary for the belief of it, even S. Peter's faith of Christ being the Son of God, and having the words of life; and that for want of this faith, many forfook Christ? And could all this have been had there been no more proposed than of bread to be eaten in memory of Christ? The Years, and those who had been bred so, had been too much used to types and figures, to make a difficulty in understanding or believing what was to be no more than a figure.

Now is there any evidence can be produced from scripture, which so positively confronts this, as to prove certainly and clearly, that all this is to be understood figuratively, and that the sacrament is no more than bread in remembrance of Christ?

adly, As to the primitive fathers there are to many texts in them, not only favouring but abetting this doctrine, that they are in general condemned by those, who undertook first to reform; besides, Melancion in particular gives this his judgment of them; Nothing, fays he, has more troubled my mind, than that of the Eucharist. And not only myself have weighed what might be said on either side; but I have also sought out the judgment of old writers touching the same: And when I have laid all together, I find no good reason that may satisfy a conscience departing from the propriety of Christ's words, This is my body. my body. Let the famous modern Hugo Gratius stand for all, who in his judgment

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upon fundry points controverted; thus fays: I read the chief moriters of old times . The workers of the three best wages Idread all and often. To thefe writings applyings the rule vof Vincentius Lirihenfis, approved by the most learned amen, and le collected that what by the testimony of the ancients, and impressions remaining to this day, was delivered always, and every where, it and constantly. I faw the fame remaining in that church, which is joined with the Roman. In these words does this great man, free from passion, and indifferent to all parties, while his whole business is to find the truth, declare his fentiments of their ancient fathers, and that the doctrines, of which they are witnesses, are those which now remain in the communion of the Roman church. Now, though it cannot be pretended, but that some expressions of these fathers minifter matter for objections against this and other doctrines; yet the confession of these two eminent men, befides many others, gives fufficient grounds to believe, that from fuch objections it cannot be clearly and certainly proved, that the fathers did not teach the real presence of Christ in the or had been universally believed inad no

take to shew the impossibility of this doctrine, there has been enough said to the principal

of them, for making a judgment, whether there be a clear and certain proof in them; besides there must be a general uncertainty in all the attempts of our weak reason, undertaking to discover the utmost extent, and settle the limits of the Almighty power of God.

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hathly, As to the authority declaring positively in behalf of this doctrine, I think it cannot clearly and certainly be proved, that the authority appearing against it, is more to be depended on, as being better qualified for knowing or judging of the truth. For, First, If the learning and piety of the persons assembled to consider of the truth of what was proposed be considered, there is no advantage can be proved in the authority declaring against this doctrine. adly. If the number of them be examined, the advantage is much on the other fide. adly, If the circumstance of time; those, who had a full hearing of the cause, when the matter was first questioned, had much the advantage of those, who called it over again many hundred years after, and were better circumstanced for judging, whether it was a doctrine, that had infenfibly crept in, or had been univerfally believed by the foregoing ages, and received from the primitive church, 4thly, If the probability of being over-ruled by interest or passion be confidered, it is certain, that the former had as great an interest in truth, as the latter; whilst they could not so canonically advance a superstititious doctrine for an article of faith, but to their own condemnation. And as for being over-awed by any temporal power or worldly convenience, there is much greater probability of this in the pastors of one nation, than in the prelates of many nations, who have no one temporal power to awe them, but are more independent in the decision of truth. stbly, If the decifion of a church representative canonically affembled in its pastors, has ever been the means for ending a controverly amongst the faithful, then the former authority, being univerfal and canonical, has much the advantage of the latter, which being only national, and of a part affembled, without any fubordination to the whole body, of which it was a part, cannot, according to the principles of Hierarchy, be esteemed either universal or canonical. Lastly, if there be any confidence in the Holy Ghot affifting and directing the decision of controversies, and leading her, as Christ promifed, into truth; then the former has much the advantage, which being affembled according to the method of the church, in like like cases, in all foregoing ages, and confating of pattors fucceeding the Apolties, might with more folid grounds depend on this divine affiftance, than an affembly of one nation, which could not be effected the catholic church reprefentative, and being a part affembled to condemn the whole, became separated from it, and by this illegal act forfeired all claim to those promises, which were made to the whole body.

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Thus, to whatever head we turn, though we find objections (and fuch there are against the fundamentals of christianity) yet they are not fuch, as with clearness and certainty prove any thing for the overthrowing this doctrine: Education, and a pre-possessed mind, may give them some advantage; but, examined by calm reason, they are so far from having it, that however this doctrine lies under the scandal of being against reason, yet I cannot fee, but that a man must do violence to the principles of the best reason. who does not believe it. The doctrine of transubstantiation being no more than a consequence of this, it stands upon the same principles, and therefore needs no farther confideration. Those, at least, who have politively subscribed against it, ought to rest filent; fince, if they confider it, there is the same power and certainty necessary for Vol. VII.

pronouncing anathema against this doctrine, as for defining it; as much to fay absolutely, It is not, as It is. And if fuch power and certainty be not allowed in a more universal affembly of the whole church, upon what title can it be claimed in a part? And I must not now enlarge; let thy heavenly light, O God, accompany the readers, and then what has been faid, will be fufficient to lead them to the truth a simil out in grivinor

to what Cirill did at the inflitution of it. and Beens as courred to his especial command, given at the fame dine, when he faid, upon delivering the cup, Dimb you all of this control was a second to

It is certain, at the last supper, 'Christ bleffed and cave the farmment in both kinds; and it is belieful that, in virtue of his thus bleffing it, and giving it to his Apolities, there is secured or express obligation upon the last of the receiving it; because the indirection and despending it to his Apolities contains to express of contains to the lairy, which alone can be to then the s anonsylltoms double binere

The only qualition therefore qual be, whether thole words of Chill, Orak you all of this, when he delivered the cup, mult necessarily be anderstood as a companil to the lang, of drinking of it? And for the pronouncing anothern against this dollars, as for denting it, as much to tay ablance,

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has Third SUNDAY after PENTECOST. 11 1

IT AVING proceeded to far upon this fubject of the Eucharift, there is one
point, belonging to it, which must not be
omitted, and that is communion in one kind.
That which makes the difficulty, is, because
receiving in one kind, is absolutely contrary
to what Christ did at the institution of it,
and seems as contrary to his express command, given at the same time, when he
said, upon delivering the cup, Drink you all
of this.

It is certain, at the last supper, Christ blessed and gave the facrament in both kinds; and it is certain, that, in virtue of his thus blessing it, and giving it to his Apostles, there is no formal or express obligation upon the laity of thus receiving it; because the institution and dispensing it to his Apostles contains no express command to the laity, which alone can be to them the

ground of fuch an obligation.

The only question therefore can be, whether those words of Christ, Drink you all of this, when he delivered the cup, must necessarily be understood as a command to the laity, of drinking of it? And for the

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solution of this question, it must fin to be owned, that, according to the account given us by the Evangelists, none were present, when thefe words were spoken, but the Apostles only: 2dly, It must be owned, that all the commands, which Christ gave to his Apostles, and are recorded in the Gofpel, cannot be understood as an obligation upon the laity: As when her commanded them, Go and teach all nations, none can prefume that the laity are all enjoined to be preachers. 3dly, It must be owned by the learned, that all the words which Christ fpoke at his last supper, cannot be supposed as addressed to the laity: For these know that when he faid, Do this in remembrance of me, he gave his Apostles power and commission to do what he had there done; that is, to blefs and confecrate the bread and wine, and in this gave them fo far the order of priefthood; there being no other words extant in holy writ, in virtue of which they can claim this particular power, but only thefe alone. Whence all thefe will agree, that these words were directed to the Apolles only, and that the laity are not thus concerned in them. And now if these particu-Tars be acknowledged, that the Apolites only were present with Christ at his last supper: That all that Christ spoke to the Apostles on

other occasions, or even at his last suppersonance be directed to the laity; whence can it be proved, that these words, Drink you all of this, are designed as a command to them?

then as a command to the laity, as may be gathered from their practice of adminishering the facrament to them on several occasions in one kind only; as to the sick, to travellers to carry with them on their journey, to infants, to the abstemious, or such as could not drink wine. Now this being a practice among the primitive christians, it must be confessed, that they judged it both lawful and profitable to receive it in this manner, and consequently, that there was no command to the contrary; since they could not judge it lawful or profitable to do what they believed contrary to Christ's command.

adly, The church, in after ages, did not understand those words, as a command to the lairy, since they ordered their receiving in one kind; which they could not have done, shad the sense of those words been delivered down by the foregoing ages of the church, as a command to the lairy.

mation have declared their fentiments to be, that Christ lest no command, for the laity to receive in both kinds. As Luther in his

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epiftle withe Bohemians. Although it would be elevent, Ways he, to receive the farnament in both kinds, and Christ has left no necessary precept in this matter; eyet it would be much better to keep peace, than to contend about both kinds And again, If you come to a place subere the facrement is given in one kind unly, receive it in one, De Ute. Spen Spaletenfis comes near to Luther, declaring, That the receiving the facrament in both kinds, is not founder a precept, but upon a considerable cause, though private, and of private perfons, it may profitably and lawfully be received under the species of bread alone. And this, he fays, is evident from the practice of the ancient and primitive christians. De Rep. Eccl. 1. 5. c. 6. Billion Forbes agrees with this prelate; for having approved the administering the cup to the laity; yet in Cafaubon's words, We always except, fays he, some special cases, in which we willingly allow it sufficient to give the facrament in one kind. De Euch. 1. 2. c. .. And then he advices the reading a book written by Caffander: It is worth the reading, lays he, where he shews, that fonctimes in the primitive church, the facrament was admini-Hered under one kind; but this only in private, en in some extraordinary occasions, or rafe of necessity, viz. To the sick, to the abstentious, to infants, to travellers. And then in the

next chapter, he discovers the mistakes in which many in his time were, and now are, which comes nearest to the present purpose. Most good people, says he, defire to receive the cup; but the generality found their desire not upon good reason; because they think Christ did fo absolutely command the receiving it, and conceive it to be fo necessary, that at no time the true sacrament of the body of Christ could be administered under one kind; which opinion puts them upon condemning the church of Rome, and revolting from it: For as to the practice of that church, it is what we neither oppose, days this great man, nor condemn, non profanely deride. Bishop White, of Ely, in the fame manner acknowledges the receiving in both kinds not to be in force of any precept recorded in Scripture; but to have place only amongst traditions received without writing: Such traditions, fays he, are thefe that follow, The delivery of the communion to the laity in both kinds, Sc. Treats on the Sab. p. 97 Bishop Montague, of Chichester, speaks to the whole point yet more fully: Where is there a command, fays he, in Scripture, of baptizing infants, or of administering the factament to such as communicate, in both kinds? Of these we can say, the Scripture seaches no fuch thing; the Scripture does not deliver these things. Mount. Orig. p. 97.

A hus dolchese learned men schoolsh not in communion with the church, bagree with the church Find. Than there is no commandin Scripture for the laity to receive in both kinds. s vaily, That indistributioned profitable to receive inchone kinds long dig That the primitive christians on several occafigns, did administer the communion in one kind, and that, on the like vite may be fo administered now a And these concessions have not only this ground in Scripture, that there are no words found in it imports ing fuch a command, but likewife that amongst the expressions, which feem to relate to the Holy Communion, there is fometimes only mention of breaking of bread. And Si Raul, I Gov. xi, speaking directly of this Subject, having repeated both eating and drinking, which fignifies both kinds, adds, 27, cating or drinking, which imports no more than one; and though it be mor thus transaced by fome, who put and inflest si or, yet it is eateth on drinketh in the Greek sopies, from which their translation is taken. of bele concessions make it needless to press the common difficulties out gof the finis chapter of S. Tobn, for all being snow grants ellabyefo good sambolity, othabithere is uno command win Scripture upon this subjects theretcan be therefore more in is. John or

any other part of the facred volumes And those words of which therew come meirelt "a commande ared not to be underftood, sas carrying the force of fichua precept with them But however to lay a word more particular, this chapter of S. John cannot be well arged against the church, by such as are moti of ther dominumion pilbernufe their divines generally hold, that nothing in this chapter has relation to the prefent fubject of the Eucharift. But if it be urged then it may be observed by ordinary readers; that as fome part of it raifes the difficulty, fo other parts of it again take it away, in the promiles of eternal life to fuch as receive under Athe form of bread alone. He the bats of this bread shall live for ever, v. 30. If any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever, and the bread, that I will give, is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world tongici galla Here are repeated promifes of falvamon to fuch as receive in one kind which would be a very great abfurdity, were there any express command of Christ, for all to receive in both. It being impossible, Christ should promise everlasting life to such as do contrary to his command; which those would certainly do, who receive in one kind, were there any command of his for receiving in both. The promises therefore of falva tion heing made in this chapter expressly to those that receive in one kind, and to those that receive in both; the patholic church therefore approves both ways of administring the Holy Communion, as equally conductble to eternal life, and has sometimes given it in one kind, and sometimes in both and

And the reason of these promises may give light to the present difficulty. For it being Christ our Lord, who is the fountain of all grace, and the author of our good, our only means of falvation must depend on him; it must proceed from the communication of himself to us, and of our being united to him. Now the most effectual means for this, according to his own inflitution, being from receiving him in the Bleffed Eucharift, and according to the constant doctrine of the catholic churchs Christ being equally present in one kind, and n both, bence receiving in either way is partaking of the Author of our falvation, and hence it can be no wonder, that the promises of salvation are made to both. He then, that receives in both kinds, receives Christ; and he that receives in one kind, receives Christ; so that though there be a difference as to the manner of receiving yet here is none, as to the thing received: it is Christ in one kind, and Christ in both in in W. SH

or Whether therefore the faithful Peccive in both kinds; or in one; they kill receive both the body and blood of Christ, which is the fubituace of all, that is required in the fixth chapter of S. John; and in this they have the great and necellary help to falvation, Christ Jesus, and while they possess him, it defrauded of any thing; fince beyond him the infirm foul can defire no other help, the afflicted no other comfort, and the pious foul no other objects of her love. Jefus is all, and whoever has Jefus in him, has all. And mothis there is no distinction made betwixt priest and people; fince the priests, whenethrethey are to communicate, as on Mandy Thursday, or in time of sickness, and at the hour of death, never receive, but as the people do, in one kind. And when they do otherwise, it is only, when they exercise the order of prielthood, and confecrate the brend and wine, which being the facrifice of the new law, they have then a command of Christ, for offering and receiving both, for more expresly to commemorate his death on the crois, where his blood being fined, the cup is received a partial of all all sevies

Upon the whole therefore, it being allowed by most authentic testimonies of menteminent in all communions, and by the

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practice of the primitive church, behave the Eucharist may be lawfully and profitably administered in one kind, when there are due reasons for it; the church cannot be justly condemned, much less forfaken, on this account; fince her decree for requiring the faithful to receive in one kind, is occasioned by the motives, which the judged (and the is the best judge) reasonable and sufficient for it. Some of these reasons were: First, Because of the great danger of shedding the cup, which might eafily happen amongst such great numbers of communicants. Thefe, who have feen the crowds at Easter communion, not thinty thousand communicants in one parish church, as it is in some of Paris, may eafily apprehend this danger 2dly, Because of the great difficulties of fome countries being provided with true wine, nepellary for this holy mystery; of which difficulty we have had fome experience in our wars, when the fearcity of wine has been supplied by artificial compositions, which though undiscernable, must be an abomination at the altar. 3dly, For the condemnation of their error, who taught, that whole Christ was not received under either kind; but his body only under the form of bread, and his blood only under the form of wine: Which being contrary to the truth of the catholic faith, this truth is now taught and

imprinted by the prefent practice of receiving in one kind Thefe are fome of the motives for this decree, which being in a matter of discipline only, and not of faith, is subject to alteration according to circumstances; and those who think them not fufficient, are in this onreasonable at least, in setting up their own reason against the judgment of the church; which is contrary to the rule of the Cofpet Direct all christians, O God, in this point, and permit none to raife to themfelves feandals through their own prefumption or mistake. Thy church has commission from thee, and by thy authority it teaches.

Who can fay as much of their own judgment ! Where then can be the wildom of forfaking the church as infufficient, and then trufting in that, which every day giving fresh proofs of its mistakes in ordinary matters, dis evidence against itself, and shews how little in is to be depended on in matters of greater difficulty? Direct all, O God." Applied by artificial compositions, which though undifferentiale must be an abomina-tion at the altar, 341, For the condemnation of their event, that raught, that whole Christ was not received under either kind; but his body only under the form of bread, and his blood only under the form of wine: Which being couldn'y to the truth of the renotic faith, this truth is now taught and

ed by the Gulpol, can be hence infliv encinament of apparent promets of the life to come. And what the bottom Fourth Sunday after Pentagografier Steeles.

AVING often given some hints of the A perverienels of the world, and of its ways being generally contrary to the ways of Christ and his Gospel, I will now on this Sunday, speak more in particular of it, both! for their comfort, who have forfaken or overcome it, and for their instruction, who are either overcome by it, or in danger of being for through the good opinion they have of its innocence. And for drawing this vast subject into one point, I will exact mine how far the world is millaken in what it esteems great and bappy, by which a trues judgment may be made of all that belongs: to it.

To take true measures here, owe must first see, what it is to be great or bappy in this world, according to the principles of the Golpel. And here, upon the first glance, we prefently discover, that as the whole defign of the Gospel is directed to a life to come; so there is nothing, which, according to this christian scheme, can be esteemed bappy or great, even in this world, but only that which being approved and recommendesteemed the way to happiness or greatness of the life to come. And what things are these? They are too obvious to become any matter of surprize: These are, to be humble and meek, to be poor in spirit, to suffer with patience all kinds of evils, to forgive injuries; to do good for evil, to help others, in whatever way they may want our help, &c. These are marked out by the Gospel, and, by the promises annexed to them, particularly distinguished as the means or ways to eternal happiness; and therefore those who practise them, must, according to the standard of the Gospel, be esteemed truly happy and great.

Now, if we turn to the world, and make a judgment of what is great and happy, according to the fyltem it approves, and according to the value it fets upon things, we need no more than another glance here to discover that greatness and happiness take their degrees from all that belongs to pride, state, idleness, excess, riches, curiosity, and the satisfaction of unprofitable, if not vicious inclinations. Thus is happiness fought in the world; and according as people have it in their power to satisfy the demands of these corrupt passions, so, in proportion,

they lesteem themselves, and are esteemed by others I happyland great ton fliw odw slode relifichis can be supposed true, and common practice fufficiently speaks the truth of it, I fummon all christians tologive in their opinion, whether the world be mistaken? And whether its ways are not contraity to the ways of Christie Fortif Christ, both by doctrine and example, recommended the practice of fuch things which lead to eternal happiness, and have the promise of fuch happiness annexed to them; also not the world contrary to him in encouraging fuch things, as are either an absolute bar against all future happinels, or, at least, evidently put it to the hazard? If Christ commands has mility and meekness, and the world fetsoa mark of contempt upon thems If Christ requires his followers to make war against pride and ambition, and the world promotes them : If Christ demands felf-denials, and taking up the cross, and the world is for having all paffions gratified, applauds idlenefs, curiofity, and excels: If Christ in vites to alms, and relieving the diffrested with whatever can be spared, and the world encourages prodigality, and wasting upon pomp; vanity, luxury, and intemperance, what otherwise might be the sublishance of the poor : If Christ enjoins all to pardon inthose who will not revengent hemed Is thus the world mot sonly incubate, done all other particulars, sets up for an interest quite opposite to the Gospel, rendering all that confemptible which Christ commands, and application of the judgment be, but that the ways of the world are contrary to the ways of Christs and that what is infamy, seandab, and folly stouthe world, is the true, solid greatness of a christian?

of the principles of faith, what then must be the next? But that all those, whatever their profession be, who live and act according to the principles of the world, are children of the world, but no disciples of Ghrist. And what then must be said of the great crowd of the people, whom we see carnelly pure shing the ways of pride, ambition, covers outness, prodigality, intemperance, injustice, revenge, sort, what can be said, but that either the Gospel is no Gospel, or that these are not christians? Their practices are so dontrary to the Gospel, that nothing more suveying the can be said of them, as a smooth

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e, of generation of mankind? For what between the common modes of dreffing. I furniture:

of money, preferment, and the common practices of felf-love, &c. who can pretend to be exempt? If none are exempt (though I have reason to hope, many are) it is not I condemn them, but the Gospel, which denounces woes against such practices; it is not I condemn them, but their own extravagances, who professing a knowledge of God's will, and that this is the rule by which those must live, who are to be saved, quite forsake this rule, throughout their whole lives, and yet wonder at those who are so bold, as to call in question their fall vation.

And is it then to be questioned in earnest? This feems very hard, whilst the whole world is engaged in the method here reproved. No, the whole world is not: And as for those that are, I pronounce not against one of them, because I see not their hearts, but I say, as much as there is of pride, of the love of the world, of prodigality in their dress, furniture, table, or retinue; as much as there is of extravagance in their expences, of the love of money or applause, in their daily labours, or in the preferments they seek, so far they depart from the Gospel, and if the Gospel be the way to salvation, so far they are in danger of being lost evernally.

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This may look fevere to those, who find themselves here concerned, but what can be abated? Does not the Gospel teach, as has been here declared; And is it to be observed or no? Is the manifestation of God's will no more than a ceremony, and the promulgation of his judgments nothing but a religious scare-crow, for the terror of tender consciences? If so, then all those are in the right who either wonder at, or despise his doctrine. But if we are to be judged by the Gospel, and receive sentence according to our works, then it ought to be neither matter of wonder nor fcorn, to be told, that the Gospel is to be followed, and that fuch as follow it not, are not in the way of falvation of it is but A

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y 1, And is then no distinction to be made between rich and poor? Is nothing to be allowed to decency, or for difference of degree?
Nothing in clothes, furniture, table, or
state? I say not so; and yet I say, according to the rule of the Gospel, pride
and, extravagance are not to be allowed
to make the distinction; and therefore since
these are forbidden in the christian's catechism, nay, since every christian, with a
solemn renunciation, abjures them at the
sont, every one of this profession, if he be
in earnest, is to retrench all that which is
the effect of these abjured principles. What

this may be, and how far in particular, this every one must determine for himself, by examining his own heart. And when the discovery is made, if their corruption be too strong for them, on the world stands in their way, they may thence make this judgment of themselves, that however the Gospel be the rule they pretend to follow, yet in reality they follow it not, but are over-ruled by other principles, which are not of Christ: And then by applying to themselves this principle of Christ, He that is not with me, is against me, let them tell me where are their hopes of belonging to Christ, and of receiving the reward of eternal life from him?

eternal life from him?

O God, if the world be thus contrary to thee, how miferable are they that follow it? How truly inconfiderable, mean, and even contemptible are they, who are no otherwise great or happy, than in that greatness and happiness which the world esteems? O God, undeceive, I beseech thee, all deluded souls, and give them a better understanding of what they profess: Deliver them from that blindness, which a wretched education and custom have brought upon them, and make them sensible that the only greatness of a christian, is to live up to those rules, which Christ has given them.

this may be, and how far in particular, the every one must determine for himself, by

di ne Fifth SUNDAY after PENTECOST VOOLE

HAVING touched last Sunday at the mistaken greatness of the world, I cannot part with this subject, but must consider it yet again more in retail, by examining the common principles of human greatness, and seeing how little they contribute to that true greatness which belongs to a christian.

There are many heads from which men raise themselves in the opinion of the world, and upon which they are really valued in the world; these now I must consider.

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ke a sh This has many temporal advantages in it, for which it deserves respect, and having an influence upon the mind, fits it for great and generous undertakings, in which it is to be admired. And yet if quality of blood be not accompanied with virtue, if it becomes false to God, by sinful practices; salle to men, by injustice or oppression; false to truth, by lying and deceit; all the quality of blood is of no value, according to the rate of the Gospel, but is bate and contemptible, and has nothing honourable or great in it. Whence those, who seek

alliance with quality, without regard to virtue, do not act upon principles of the Gospel, but of the world, and in this are not christians.

adly, Titles of honour, places of preferment, favour of princes, give christians opportunity of being instruments of great good. But if christians in these circumstances abuse the advantages they have, and turning all to ambition, prostitute their power and consciences to private interest, they are then not great, but infamous in the christian scheme.

adly, State, retinue, and all kinds of pomp, draw the eyes of admiring crowds, and yet all this greatness, if it be the effect of pride, or of an envious and ambitious heart, by the measures of the Gospel, is as contemptible as that pride, which gives birth to it; so that while the world adores it as heavenly, God and his angels rank it with the devils.

athly, An imperious temper, and carrying it high, so as to despise inseriors, and not to allow equals, is what obliges dependence to respect, and has the air of something great; but weigh it in the Gospel balance, and it will appear as light as sinoke, and its value will be the same as that of pride and self-conceit.

ferviceable to very good purposes, but, if they are either gained unjustly, or loved immoderately, or hoarded up unprofitably, or wasted prodigally, and those better uses neglected, to which they ought to be applied; then in our rule, Dives encompassed with plenty, and glorious to the eyes of men, is more miserable than Lazarus, that lies neglected at the door.

followed by the admiring eyes of all that come in fight) add nothing to the christian's value, but as far as pride, vanity, envy, or self-esteem has a hand in purchasing or putting them on, so far is this fine figure the scorn of heaven; and if there be a vicious soul under that expensive cover, then silth is their character, and their true emblem is in being moving tambs, which have nothing but corruption and rottenness under walls of state.

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former; for there is no beauty in our rule, but what is in the foul; this is what heaven regards alone, and if the other be without this, it is then the fame in the heathen and christian, and as time will equally disfigure them, so likewise rottenness will consume, and the same eternity devour them.

se gain reputation, and leave actions, fuch as gain reputation, and leave monuments both of hillory and marble, are nothing in the christian account. For if the cause does not raise their value, the doom of the actors will be proportioned to their ambition, and what then cam't be, but of milery?

rich furniture, a purie to answer all the demands of curiosity and appetite, time at command for whatever pleases, who are considerable advantages, and such, as the world calls happiness, and yet, according to the Gospel-reckoning, are no more than the happiness of the stage, which may be accompanied with real misery and infamy; and such is the character of all under these enjoyments, who prostitute all to felf-love, and live unmindful of a future state.

Luftly, Learning, abilities in preaching or writing, great wit, good understanding, church-preferment, rich benefices, reputation of piety, large alms, noble foundations for the distressed, &c. are things that found great in the world, and yet if these are only the support or effect of a vain humour, if they are not levelled at eternity, and directed to their right end, they make no more than a scribe or a pharisee in the Gospel, and the wees pronounced against these

thefe, will be when fate, who should have abuse to mise to themselves monundents upon boby grounds.

Here is the time character drawn according to the principles of the Cofpel, of all the things which the world principally admites a And if this be true, then let christians he their own judges, how much they act conmary to what they profess, as often as they make use of these false measures, of the world; as often as by these they regulate their defires or labours, and according to thefe are industrious to feek greatness for shemfelves or their children. It is certain, that in these defires, and in all their solicitude for the accomplishment of these defires, they are carried on like heathers, and they can give no proof of being enlightened by faith, or having any advantage in the Golpel; fince those very things, which an infidel naturally admires, they also admire, and feek them with the fame affurance, as withe Cospel had given no caution against them, or had not proposed to them the fearch of more fubitantial and everlaiting goods. Must it not then here be fet down, that whatever proposals christians have of raising themselves or theirs, upon any of the principles and motives above mentioned, they in this proceed, not as christians, but Vol. VII.

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cither lay up or expend upon the same motives, they act, not as christians, but heathens, that wherever the general business of life is upon such proposals and the execution of them, there the life is so far, not christian, but heathen?

What then, O God, is the state of the christian world, whilst some chosen ones excepted, whom thou half railed above the earth, the greatest number of those, who profess thy name, are carried away by the charms of worldly goods, fludy all that is vain, are influenced by pride, admire the applaule of men, facrifice justice to interest, are eager for preferments, riches, and state; have curiofity and extravagance to command their purses, and either covetous labour or vicious idleness their time! Thus they live themselves; thus they breed up their children, and by the same principles dispose of them. And these however are not the scandalous ones, as being exempt from notorious vice, and yet scandalous enough, whilst they despile thy Gospel, and live according to the world, which thou halt declared to be an enemy to thee odw rader abarada rieds

How contrary is this to the example of our Bleffed Redeemer, by whose blood, as we have been rescued from death, so by his

fairlt, we know, we ought to hived But where is his spirit; whilst in whatever we do, there appears nothing but the spirit of the world? Our time, our money, our life, being all fubject to pride, luxury, and prodigality; and all those other evils being received into commission, which, according to the rule given us, ought not to be admitted where Christ is professed. Quite otherwise have those done, who have in earnest followed their mafter: The first disciples wholly abandoned the world, that they might walk in his steps: Infinite numbers afterwards did as entirely forlake it, in giving their lives for him: And how many of those, who either escaped or survived the persecution, forfook it too, by parting with all that, which was not absolutely necessary for life, and daily contriving with how little of it they could live? This has been the method ever fince of those who have seriously refollow Christ, by separating from the world, and allowing of no other wants, . but what are within the compals of necessity. If this has been the rule of those who have endeavoured to follow Christ; what must their character be, who live daily covering and grafping at the world, enlarge their appetite by all the provocations, that can be invented; inflead of necessity, have pride to

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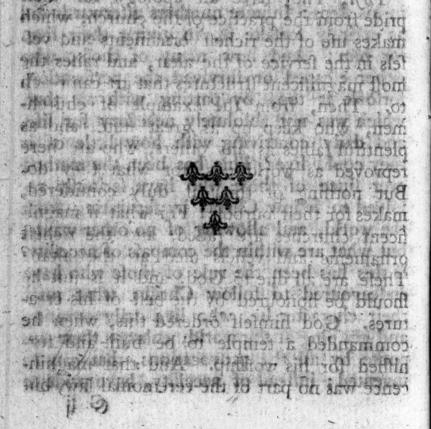
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drefs them; instead of necessity, have a debauched appetite to provide their table; instead of necessity, have ambition and an unsatiable curiosity to furnish their houses; in sine, have all the passions of a corrupt nature, and all the customs of a vicious world for their counsel, how they may more and more be involved in it? O God, when will thou open the eyes of this perverse world, and make it more sincere to what shou hast taught it!



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ON last Sunday I pointed at in particular the various mistakes of the world, and at their perverse blindness, who say, they are disciples of Christ, and yet follow the world. Now I must consider the pleas, these christians (so they call themselves) make in their own defence.

First, They have an apology for their pride from the practice of the church, which makes use of the richest ornaments and vesfels in the fervice of the altar, and raifes the most magnificent structures that art can reach to. Then, from the example of churchmen, who keep up as great state, and as plentiful tables as any others, who are herereproved as worldlings, for what they do. But nothing of this, if duly confidered, makes for their purpole: For what if magnificent churches are raifed, and the richest ornaments and vessels used at the altar? These are all due to God, and it is just he should be honoured by the best of his creatures. God himfelf ordered this, when he commanded a temple to be built and furnished for his worship. And that magnificence was no part of the ceremonial law, but

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was due to his service; and if due then, is much more to now, when being more glorious in his mercies, he ought to be more glorious in his worthip. And if there was any figure in that state, it was principally of the heavenly ferufalem, and for comprehending the majesty of his infinite being: And we being yet in a figure as to all that is yet to come, we have still the same reason for glorifying him in the same manner, and for giving the faithful the same helps for raising their hearts towards God, and their desires to the possession of what is eternal. And what is this now to man? Is the finner to be honoured, because God is to be glorified? Let but man look into himself, and he will fee there to much of unworthiness and milery, that he must confess contempt and reproach to be his due: And how then can it be just to decree honours for himself and contrive all ways to draw respect; when knowing he deferves none, he must know this to be deteftable injustice and usurpation?

And what if he has the example of churchmen? As far as there is pride or excess in what they do, so far it is more sinful in them, than in others, and therefore not proper to be made a precedent? S. Chrysostom thus gives his opinion of priests; Non arbitror inter sacerdotes multos ess, qui salvi fiant, sed multo plures, qui persant. Ho. 3. in Act. Lam of opinion, that among A priests, not many gree faxed, but that much the greater number ene damned. If there be reason to apprehend this true, then there can be no reason to make an example of all they do; left this should prove the making one evil the apolo-

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gy for another.

The money however christians spend, they fay, is their own, and why then may they not fpend it to their own use? It is their own, as flewards only; for in regard of God, they can no otherwise esteem themfelves; fince all they have is received from him, and to him an account must be given of, it, And though a good account may be given of what they ule, yet not of that, which they abuse. Now to discover what they abuse, they are not to reckon as heathens, but as christians; and to themselves I refer the matter, fo that I will fet all that down, as not abused, which can pass for a reasonable expence according to christian reason.

And here I desire to know of them when na person lays out money upon what might be excused, and takes little or no care of necessaries, whether this be a disposal of money according to reason? What then must all their expences be, when they scatter

their memby according to inclination, mand paid by those better ways, in which it might be dery ceable to their falvation, which is the only thing necessary to Can these pass for reasonable expenses, according to christian reason it.

addy, Cam it be a reafonable expence, when money is there laid out, where it does themselves harm, and there spared, where it might do them good? Let them then confider the estates they wear on their backs; they fpend at their tables, they hang upon their walls, they fet up in their closets, they leave at play houses and taverns, the waste in retinue and state, &c. Is not the greatest part of this expence to ferve vanity, curiofity, idleness and intemperance? And what are thefe, according to christian reason, but real evils, fuch as they ought to be more afraid of than the plague, as being truly plaguesi to the foul, fuch as threaten it with eternal death? And if they look over these expences again, and fee, that with this very money they might have relieved thousands of poor, clothed the naked, redeemed prisoners, brought comfort to the orphan and widow, and thus laid up for themselves treasures in heaven against the day of their distress; is: it not plain to their confusion, that they have laid out their money, where it has done

themselves harm, and there spared it, where it might have done them good o And how then can these pass for reasonable expences, according to christian reason? To buy poison with money, that is necessary for bread; and for the fick to be at a charge for whatever is most likely to inflame their distemper. would be as much agreeable to the principles of common reason, as these expences are to the reason of the Gospel. And must they not then be let down as abuses of what has been entruled with them? And how then can this be a defence to them who have received whatever they posses, in trust only, and must give in the particulars of their administration ! every to the exercise with the riber

If this plea will not do, what must christians do, that live in the world? Would you have them be ridiculous? They are so already in the highest degree, in buying smoke, vapour and shadow with that, which might be the purchase of heaven. But they will be laughed at if they do otherwise. Then the question is, whether they must be really mad, that they may not be pointed at by those, who are so? I would encourage civility as much as another; but I would have the matter considered, when the compliment expected is likely to be too chargeable. If parting with my reason be the condition of

the civility, I think it is much too dear, and much move so, if nothing will serve, but to jump into hell, or walk leisurely into it, which is much at one. If this be what the world expects (and this it does expect, in setting up for all those ways, which are condemned in the Gospel) then I am rather for venturing its displeasure, than purchasing its favour at so high a rate. I had rather be laughed at by a mad world, than become reprobate to the Gospel and be damned.

But however, I cannot but think, there is a medium; and that a christian may fo live in the world, as not to join with it in its follies, and yet not to be ridiculous. Instead of rules for this, I propose the practice of fome; for fome there are who may be examples: Those, who use seasonable recreations, without living an idle life; who know how to be clean and decent, without coming up to the extravagance of the mode; who maintain their degree, without fatisfying ambition; who provide a table, without making it an altar to appetite; who entertain friends as persons of reason and faith, and not as brutes; who are cheerful without being mad; who observe discipline, without the rigour of the cloylter, or the liberties of unbelievers; who have a purse open to reasonable conveniences of life, without the flavish

Tolicitade of the mifery of the prodigality of a vain and curious humour, which is ever apon the literal and never to be fatisfied. Some of these there are in the world, though almost as rare as the just in Sodom . The method of these may be an example, though with this caution flill, that the nearer persons come to the rules of necessity and sufficiency, the more they will have the commendations of the Gospel: the nearer they will come to the example of Christ, who being the eternal wildom of his Father, gives christians the best instructions how to be wife, much better than they can learn from the world. And if they are wife according to Christ, what matter is it, if the world calls them fools? To be like their mafter, ought not to be their fear, but their defire; not their grief, but their glory. Inspire, O Jesus, all thy folplowers with the admiration and love of thy example, that they may value no other wifdoin or greatness, but what thou hast taught them, and despite all that the world calls so, which under better names, is nothing but balenels and folly andred as about mist

and not as brutes, who are cheerful without being mad; who objerve alcipline, without the rigger of the cheerful without a purfuence of the conveniences of the, without the flavilh, able conveniences of the, without the flavilh

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Seventh Sunday after Pentecost onne

TAVING discoursed, in the foregoing I Sundays, of the true greatness, which belongs to a christian in this life; now mast be confidered the means proper for obtaining it to And whoever has but glanced laterited must see, that there is no possibility of coming to it, but by the government of all those inclinations, which carry us towards the world: upon which confideration I here fet! down temperance, as one of the most general means, and absolutely necessary for obtaining that happiness, of which we have hitherto discourfed, and which confifts in following Christ, and not the world. By temperance here, I do not understand it, as it prescribes rules only in meat and drink; but in a more general fense, as it tempers all the motions of our foul and body, and keeps them under fuch a just restraint, as to prevent all kinds of excess.

This temperance is what all christians ought earnestly to defire, pray for, and by all ways be industrious to obtain; for fince corruption has mixed itself with our nature, but what is subject to variety of finful excel-

fes; so that if by temperance, they are not moderated and kept under government, we cannot possibly escape the guilt of repeated and endless crimes: and how far then must we necessarily be from that disposition, which

makes the christian's happiness?

According therefore to the variety of our inclinations, in which we are apt to exceed, fo mast our temperance be multiplied, or, at least, so many several guards must be ser, for preventing disorder. We are subject to excess in meat and drink, in apparel, in fleeping, in all that is carnal or fenfual in ust In these particulars then, it being dicovered, that gluttony and a vitiated appetite are ever ready to give their orders at the table; intemperance to command the glaffes; vanity the clothes; laziness the sleep; sensuality whatever can be serviceable to this passion; temperance observes the danger or the disorder, and examining how far these evils usurp upon right, endeavours, to bring all to rule and meafure. She confiders the ends which nature requires to be fatisfied in all our wants, as in eating, clothing, fleeping, Ed and having feen what is necessary to faisfy those ends, she there publishes her declaration; lo far necessity, so far nature, and the good of nature requires; so far is just, so far is a dury. And because this cannot be so nicely judged as to be brought to a point, she therefore allows some latitude in it, and whatever so far exceeds what nature requires, as to be evidently the effect of something corrupt in us, this temperance abhors, and having declared it an usurpation, she resolves upon bringing it under a better

regulation.

We are subject to another great excess in our words, being very often influenced in these by vanity, anger, and ambition; very often by jealoufy, envy, and partiality; very often by flattery, rash judgment, and morofeness; very often by impatience, contempt, and indifferetion; very often by fenfuality, prophanenels, and irreligion; finally, there is not any one weakness, passion, or ill affection in us, but it stands often at the wheel, and turns the tongue answerable to the disordered motions of the heart or judgment. All these temperance observes, and knowing them to be the effects of corruption, and therefore to be contrary to those rules of the Gospel, which every christian has undertaken, and is obliged to follow; therefore the fets her guard upon the tongue, and gives it directions. First, When to speak, and when to keep silence. adly, To whom to speak, and where 3dly, Horo much to speak, and in what manner.

rules endeavours to bring the tongue into a due subjection to reason and faith, which being the guides by which we are to be directed both as men and christians, can be the only means by which we can preserve innocence, and prevent the guilt of those infinite sins, to which our corruption leads us.

Temperance goes yet farther, and inspects even the motions of the foul, in which we are likewise subject to great excess. It confiders the understanding, for though knowledge be a commendable quality, and, under good regulation, affords great light to falvation, yet it has its failings; sometimes in rashness, in pretending a clear fight of what it fees nothing but the shadow; in absolutely pronouncing upon its own prefumption; and being positive in maintaining its false steps, rather than own mistakes: Sometimes in pride, by over-rating its own private notions, and undervaluing all fuch as diffent from them. Sometimes in curiofity, by enquiring into fuch things as are either unprofitable or hurtful; and by pretending to take off the veil from such mysteries, which God is pleased to hide from us, and in which he demands our faith, and not our understanding. Sometimes in blindness, by being covered with

fuch mists raised from passion, interest, or education of as mot sto deen the most obvious truths, and to proceed contrary to the very principles of common reason. Sometimes by weakness in the fill application of good principles, and by mistaking the vapours raifed from fears and melanchely, for the rays and light of the most folid reason; and thus often bringing light lifelf into the darkness of dispute and doubt. Many other failings and weaknesses there are, to which our understanding is subject; and this being our general guide in all concerns both of this life and the next, temperance is here upon the strictest watch, as knowing, that a miftake here, is many times, as poilon in a fountain, which diffuses itself into all its ftreams, and does mischief wherever it goesto Upon this motive temperance frands consi cerned putting in cautions against its rashness, demands a review of what feems ready for a positive fentence; abating its pride by the remembrance of past oversights; giving a check to many of its enquiries, bringing its principles and motives to a better examen; and often questioning its credulity upon in fulficient evidence. Thus it endeavours to prevent all the mischiefs of pride, positivenels, curiofity, blindness, passions, credulity, weakness, and whatever other distempers there are of our understanding. And if

that, which more and one of the point of the

a Again, temperance calls the will to an account; and feeing how perverfely blind it is dinoits inclinations, defires, daffections, passions, and runs at all that pleases, without any confideration of the poilon that lies hid, or the mischiefs of thus gratifying itselfs Hence it is often restrained, and by severe checks is oftopt in the midft of its molt violent defires; all its motions are brought, to the test of God's will, and no farther allowed than this will give leave; nay, it is often confined within stricter bounds, fo to bring it under better government, and by the exercise of self-denials to straighten both its expectation and defires, and make it more easy in yielding, when it is necessary it. should yield. In the same manner is a watch let upon the imagination, fo that as often as it begins by hurtful suppositions idle amufements, chimerical arguments, vains entertainments, to soften, exasperate, diffipate; for deject the mind, it is presently rem cathed, reproached with its folly, and by being sturned to better objects, is made, ferviceable to better endsu- 10 - 10 - 215 373

Thus temperance is a general means, and absolutely necessary for coming to that state of mind, which makes both the happiness and greatness of a christian in this life. Those who make use of it as they ought, are in the way to all that is substantially good and great, and it is not in the power of misfortune, to deprive them of the honour of this character. Those who use it not, and have no regard to its directions in the language of the Gospel, can never be wife of great: Though they have both wit and learning, these cannot rescue them from the ignominy of fools; though they have all the advantages of riches, beauty, honour, and their most admired satisfactions, yet they are nothing better than flaves, and there is real mifery and baseness under all this pageantry, fuch as is at prefent the hatred of heaven. and if not reformed, will bring them to the eternal form of devils. The acted com

O God of mercy, look with compassion on all, who profess a faith in thee: Give them all a sense of their duty; open their eyes to see and know those means, which alone are capable of bringing them to the happiness of being christians in life as well as name; and let them not confine their desires to a happiness, that is false and perishing, when thou hast prepared for them that which is solid and eternal.

absolutely necessary for coming to that state

and Eighth Sunday after Pentecost 1 to

Hofe who fee the necessity of temperance for coming up to the rules of a christian life, must fee likewise, that prudence is as necessary as temperance, and that they are both fo linked together, that one cannot be without the other. The prudence here defired, is that of which all are capable: It is hot the privilege of wit or learning; it has no dependence on riches or honour; itsis not confined to climates; but equally lies open to persons of all estates and conditions; to the poor, as to the rich; to the fervant, as to the mafter; to the lame, fick, and blind, as to the healthy; to those that cannot read, as to the greatest scholars. And this is one effect of God's infinite mercy to man, that as all, without any respect of perions, are called to falvation, fo the means of falvation are common to all conditions, and all are capable of them.

What is this prudence? It is to feek God, and so to manage all things belonging to human life, as to make them serviceable for the possession of him. It is prudence then to consider God infinite in majesty and goodness, and ourselves infinite in misery:

that which is loud and elemal.

This was the wisdom S. Augustin prayed for: Noverim te, noverim me: Let me know thee, O Lord, and let me know myself. It is prudence seriously to consider what is best, and resolutely to embrace it; and what is worst, and with zeal to detest it. It is prudence to consider, what will be the end of the just and the unjust; the comfort of being eternally united to God, and the despair of being for ever separated from him. It is prudence, carefully to avoid all that, which can eternally divide from God, and likewise whatever can delay the possession of him. Finally, it is prudence, to love and practice all those things, which are capable of drawing us nearer to God, and of engaging his goodness to our affistance.

Hence it is the office of prudence to be in commission with temperance, to order the thoughts and heart towards God; the affections that they be not immoderately engaged with creatures; the will and desires, that they be not alienated from God; the intention, that it be not mixed with earth; the judgment, that it be not corrupted; the words and actions, that they be not desiled with what is sinful; but that the whole man be so ordered, that God may be sought in all things, and a nearer approach daily made to that last end, for which man was created.

Hence it has a particular concern in time of plenty, peace, and all kind of prosperity, to be watchful against all abuses; that these temporal bleffings be not made the support and increase of vanity, idleness, prodigality, and extravagance; but that an advantage be made of them all, to the greater honour of God, and benefit of the foul. For this end prudence deliberates, how thefe may be turned to the best account; and upon the confideration, that all that money is loft to eternity, which is laid out to compliment a vain ambitious humour, or an extravagant world; that all that time is loft to eternity. which is given to unnecessary sleep, idleness, and dangerous entertainments; the refolves upon a better method, and that is, so to manage all the gifts of God, that they be to the honour of the giver, and not walted in folly. Hence bringing all expences as near to necessity, as discretion will allow, the is not folicitous to heap up immense portions for children, by which charity is disabled; but leaving these with a decent provision, the looks out for the poor, the comfortless, and diffrested; she gives bread to the hungry, liberty to the prisoner, relief to the fick; she disposes of orphans, and takes care of thole, whole years, lex, and other circumstances expose them most to

danger. She confiders the demands of picty, and where there appears an encouraging prospect of spiritual good, there puts forth her helping hand. She likewife orders the distribution of time, allows to sleep, what is enough for nature, but not for floth; allows for dreffing, what is enough for decency, but not for pride, nor even to deprive the foul of that retirement which her wants require. She makes and admits fuc's visits, as a christian correspondence requires, but generally gives to these no more than the remnants of time, dividing the business of the day betwixt the duties of the foul and family, and yet still permitting charity to interrupt or dispense with this conditioned as to read e find the service of the

A like concern has prudence fo to manage all misfortunes of life, that they may be ferviceable to eternity, as the most desirable conveniences of health, plenty, and peace. Hence whether misfortune be transitory or fixt, she first labours to moderate, and by degrees to suppress all inclinations to impatience, fretfulness, disquiet, murmuring, and complaints; she gives a check to fears, and the rovings of a melancholy and disturbed imagination; because she knows there is nothing more pernicious than favour and indulgence to these interior disorders. Then

confidering the great advantages, that may be made of whatever it be, that afflicts, the strongly persuades the soul into this method; raifing the heart with hope and confidence in God, bending it with submission to his appointments; exercifing it in prayer and patience; teaching it to make a facrifice of all its oppressions, for the atonement of past offences, and the obtaining of future happiness; shewing it the vanity and uncertainty of all earthly comforts, and leading it to the defire of unchangeable rest.

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In this manner prudence manages both extremes, and all other circumstances of human life, having only this one study, how to make such a christian use of the present condition, as to render it advantageous towards the gaining a better life. And in this imitates the wife merchant, who contrives to make the best marker of his goods, and is folicitous that none perish on his hands, or go off at an under rate, fince there is no dreumstance of life, whether in good or bad fortune, but what may ferve in the purchase of eternal happiness; it must be vile ill-husbandry, and fuch as is not confiftent with prudence, to let it be lost for . want of care, to throw it away upon fmoke and butter-flies, or fo to abuse it, as to make it the purchase of everlasting chains and flavery.

And yet is not this the common method of trading in the world, where little care is used for turning the bleffings either of plenty or afflictions to the best account; where there is little folicitude for gaining heaven by them; but the outfide of what is propofed, is either to gain money or honour, or by fine feathers to appear in state, to live in idleness, or purchase such fatisfactions, which have nothing lafting but the mifery that attends them? Where afflictions are as much abused, and instead of being sanctified by an humble patience for the price of heaven, are attended with fo much injustice, intemperance, impatience, murmuring, curfing, and despair, that a person in affliction is made the refemblance of hell, and nothing but that unchangeable state can add to the misery.

Thus wholly unacquainted with prudence are the great part of the christian world; they know what it is to be wife and industrious in seeking that which perishes, in obtaining what is to fatisfy their present corruption; in this they know how to contrive, to solicit, to labour, to watch, to suffer, to conceal their resentments, to stifle their passions, nothing of substity or art is wanting to accomplish their designs. But as for the better part, which is that of securing

curing eternity, how little pains do they take to know any thing of it, and how much less to do any thing for it? In this the wifest of the world are fools, and the most industrious are without life. For fince we are born to enter into an eternal state. and our being here can be for no more than a few years; what must it be esteemed. but unaccountable madness, to be solicitous. and labour for the convenience of a few moments, and leave eternity to the hazard. or, which is worse, to make their eternity certainly miserable, for the satisfaction of a life that perishes under the very enjoyment? And yet what else is it the wife of the world do? Nay, what elfe is it that makes the great business of the world? Observe all the noise, hurry, and folicitude of men; examine all their contrivances and cabals; fee what foring it is that moves them in all they undertake; what raises them in the morning; what moves them in the day; what breaks their rest at night; and you will find there is feldom any proposal beyond money, interest, or the satisfaction of some natural pasfion, without the least confideration of eternity; but too often in such a way as they know to be inconsistent with the well-being of it. So that the true emblem of the world and its wisdom is not full in the ants, who Vol. VII.

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are busy all day in carrying of straws; but we must go to Bedlam in romance, where men are working hard all day for making their own chains, and with music and dancing, carrying wood for a fire which they know is to burn them.

This is the wisdom of all those unhappy ones, whose whole concern is confined to the present life: Deliver me, O God, from this blindness, and have compassion on all those who are thus miserable; may they see their present folly, and by thy grace be convinced that there is no true wildom, but in feeking thee. What him awo on this

For this and I him demand of them, whe her the principles of Common reason do not? oblige thole who have a re-propole lone nd in what they do canter ast to conform bly to that end, as joine proper means for braining it? 22/10 Whether the Golpel ioes not reach come is believe it that ne end for wice is born into this world's to gain life of cast? Realon apfor obligively. in the affirmative do the fifth 6. bele queries and both reason and faith to he fecond 'This heing thed tuppoled as indeniable, I demand, again; Whether there an be any degree of true wildom in viting ther contrary to tealon and faith, brill as shave no regard to them? Hore the best a



Language violence

ons Ninth Sunday after Pentecost.

AVING proposed this principle last Sunday, that there is no true wisdom but in seeking God, the iniquity of the christian world will not give me leave to change the subject; but I must press it yet again, to see if the repetition of it will make any impression, so as to oblige the professors of the Gospel to change their method, or, at

least, to own their folly.

For this end I here demand of them, whether the principles of common reason do not oblige those who have it to propose some end in what they do, and to act fo conformably to that end, as to use proper means for obtaining it? 2dly, Whether the Gospel does not teach as many as believe it, that the end for which man is born into this world is to gain life eternal? Reason answers positively in the affirmative to the first of these queries, and both reason and faith to the fecond. This being then supposed as undeniable, I demand again, Whether there can be any degree of true wildom in acting either contrary to reason and faith, or so as to have no regard to them? Here can be no

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place for doubt in the answer to this question; since the wildom of rational creatures is to act conformably to the principles of reason, and the wildom of Christians is to act conformably to the principles of reason

informed by faith.

If this may be supposed, then let us bring the common method of Christians to this test. Are pride, ambition, prodigality, or extravagance, a proper means for gaining eternal life? Is a life of idleness, intemperance, or luxury, proper for coming to the end for which man was created? Is the love of money or applause a help to heaven? Is injuffice, fraud, or over-reaching, any of the expedients for obtaining future happiness? All these are marks by the Gospel, as evils, which God detefts, and confequently are fo far from being any advantage in the way to eternal life, that they leave a guilt upon the foul, and hinder it from having any part in that possession. It is so. Then what are you doing, who through the course of your lives are under the conduct of these evils, and are generally led along by them? Who have pride to clothe you, ambition or interest to direct you in the great affairs of life, idlenels to find you leifure hours, intemperance and luxury to spend them; who have frauds and injuffice to draw in money, and

either covetoulnels to hoard it, or prodigality to scatter it in the service of every idle humour? Can you pretend that in this way you are mindful of the end for which you were born, and are carefully making towards it? No, it is evident there is nothing of this in the general management of your lives; what you do, is expressly contrary to the end of your creation; it is that which will make it impossible for you ever to come to that happiness. What then is to be concluded, but fince there is no wisdom but in acting conformably to the principles of reafon and faith, that you have no christian wisdom in you, who believing the end for which you were born to be the possession of God, have not your lives directed to that end?

And you, who, though not in these extremes, yet live almost unmindful of God; who rise to your work, or to play; who eat, drink, sleep, and through the course of the day have your thoughts wholly busied in worldly solicitude, or worldly folly; who study nothing but how to gain, how to advance or please yourselves; who, in a lower degree, have a mixture of as many follies of pride, envy, prodigality, idleness, self-love, and intemperance as the others above, and run over such a form only of prayer as may H iii

be enough to convince you that you yet believe in God; you, I fay, what are you doing? Can you think fuch a life as yours is feeking God? Can you pretend that you are using proper means for gaining that end of possessing God, for which you were born? Observe but the method of your days, and then tell me whether you can in earnest think this is the way to heaven? If you have any value left for truth, you must own that you have seldom any thoughts of God or of heaven; that you are led along every day either by floth, vanity, idleness, or interest, just as if you were insidels; and if there be any morality, is it any other than of the philosopher's, such as humour, pride, or regard to the world exacts? Where then is your wifdom, whilft knowing the end of your creation, you feek it not? This is not acting conformably to the principles of reason and faith, and therefore cannot be christian wifdom.

From the application of this rule, it is in every one's power to see how much or how little of their lives is directed by the wisdom of the Gospel; and they may with some assurance conclude, that whether as to their thoughts, words, actions, money, time, industry, solicitude, or business, as far as they have sought God by them, so far they have

done wifely according to the wildom of the Gospel. And hence they may see, First, That the practice of wildom being the ordering their lives to God, those are the wifest Christians who are industrious to direct all they do, and all they fuffer, to God; who make every circumstance of life to be some means of approaching to him; for this is living according to the principles of reason and faith, and making towards the end for which they had a being and all other bleffings given them: This is coming nearest to the wildom of God, in directing, with him, all creatures to his glory, and making thein ferviceable to the end of their creation; and therefore, being the participation of the diwine wisdom, is most becoming Christians, who by their profession are to live by his fpirit.

2dly, They may fee the truth of that position, that to be truly wise is not the privilege only of the learned, rich, or of men of good natural abilities; but is common to the poor, the unlearned, and the most miserable of the world; because nothing more is required to be truly wise, but to believe in God, and to seek him; and this the poor unlearned and miserable are as capable of doing as any others, since God may be as truly sought and honoured in the evils H iv these suffer, as in any blessings which others

enjoy.

3dly, They may fee that it is not a chriftian part to deride or despise any for their mifery, for their deformity of body, ungenteel behaviour, meannels of natural parts, or for any public difgrace or oppression; because if persons under these temporal disadvantages bear with patience the abjection caused by them, and offer an humble sacrifice of all they fuffer to God, in the adoration of his holy will; if those of mean capacity feek God with fincerity, according to the talents he has given them, they may have much the preference to those who undervalue and expose them to fcorn; he that ferves, may be better than he that commands; there may be more value under rags than tiffue; he that runs by the coach, may be greater than he that rides in state; and he that is under the executioner's hand, happier than he who pronounced death upon him. For that a good use of misfortunes is true wisdom, and this gives a real value to the possessions; while earthly advantages, without this, have nothing in them but what is superficial.

athly, They may see, that to renounce the world, with all its greatness, in exchange for better circumstances for the service of

God, is the greatest wisdom; because this is not only to seek God, but to offer all, both life and time, to his service; and make choice of such conveniences, where there is

less danger of dissipation.

the strictest recluse, or in any others, who live in the practice of the most religious exercises of fasting, prayer, and alms, if the general design be only to gain the reputation of a saint; or if all be done with that neglect and indifferency, as is wholly unworthy of him whom they pretend to serve; for that is not seeking God, nor making towards the end of their creation, and consequently can have no wisdom in it. What then becomes of all prayer, and other exercises, which are not carefully performed? God is spirit and truth, and those who do not thus adore him, are not to be numbered among the wise.

Lastly, That it is in the power of all perfons that live in the world, of whatever condition they be, to be truly wife, by feeking God in all they do, and in all they fuffer; that the more they do for engaging God's mercy to them, the wifer they are: And though the religious state have many great advantages, yet that people in the world, by good management of their much worse circumstances, may be eminent in true wisdom, and in the rewards of it.

But this wisdom is thy gift, O God; be so merciful then to grant it to all, according to their wants. The rich want it for the right administration of the bleslings they enjoy; the poor and afflicted, for making a good use of their misfortunes; all others want it in their different stations; grant it, O God, to all according to their wants.

cessair, mrt Chaffan etc Alence the wi man fayse etc entre etcher oradented que milen impativo ales fadis fultition (main - The law is paired in good ed with great prudence; and he first is rapi went, the world felly good to thete words de clares, shat no wildon canabe, expeded where there is no patiences and that femans able fully is the Oit of raparents. In realon is obvious enough, Devants, impa gence diforders the mind, and renders incapable of weighing of confoliants; gard what then can be one offed by tallmely Patience therefore is need in a But what is this patience i de is a term ners of mind in peaceably bearing whatever evils come to our lot. It not ouly fland with peace under the scourge of trials, which one from the hand of God to the likewing ader whatever difficulties we meet an live



aibro Tenth Sunday after Pentecost.

HOSE who have confidered what has been faid of temperance and prudence, will find that neither of these can be expected or practifed without great patience, and therefore that patience is absolutely necessary in a Christian life. Hence the wife man fays, Qui patiens est, multa gubernatur. prudentia; qui autem impatiens est, exaltat stultitiam suam. He that is patient is governed with great prudence; and he that is impatient, shews his folly: and in these words declares, that no wisdom can be expected, where there is no patience; and that remarkable folly is the fruit of impatience, the reason is obvious enough; because impatience diforders the mind, and renders it incapable of weighing or confulting; and what then can be the effect but rashness? Patience therefore is necessary.

But what is this patience? It is a firmness of mind in peaceably bearing whatever evils come to our lot. It not only stands with peace under the scourge of trials, which come from the hand of God; but likewise under whatever difficulties we meet in the

practice of virtue, whether arising from our own infirmity, or from the malice of the devil, or the opposition of the world. It not only stands with peace under such corrections, reproofs, or evils, which we draw upon ourselves, through any offence, fault, or indifcretion of our own; but even under all fuch as undefervedly fall upon us, when we are wholly innocent, and without fault. And though there be a particular difficulty in supporting such injuries or evils, to which we have given no provocation, but are wholly blameless as to the occasion of them; yet still these may and ought to be suffered with more satisfaction, than when we have our conscience to reproach us with any guilt, by which we have deferved them; because there is a comfort in innocence, which moderates, and even fweetens the greatest evils, and the promise of particular blesfings, which ever adds to this comfort. To this purpose is the advice of St Peter; Let none of you suffer as a murderer, or thief, or railer, or a coveter of other men's goods; but if as a Christian, let him not be ashamed, but glorify God in this name, 1 Pet. iv. 15. For it is better, if the will of God be so, that you suffer for well-doing, than doing ill, iii. 17. For this is acceptable to God, if a man for conscience towards God, be afflicted, suffering wrong fully.

For what glory is it, if offending you are punished, and take it patiently? But if, when you do well, and suffer for it, you take it patiently, this is acceptable to God. For to this are you called, because Christ also suffered for us, leaving you an example, that you follow his steps, ii. 19.

Again, patience preserves peace of mind, not only when the provocation comes from such whom we esteem, love, or depend on; but likewise, when from others, whom we dislike, and who have nothing in them, which either moderates or awes our passion. Lastly, it keeps all in peace, not only when injuries are offered, or persecution comes from wicked or indiscreet persons; but also, when from such as are good, and our friends; and this, when we have done no ill to deserve or provoke it.

In this manner patience stands steadily under all kinds of evils; its only business being to bear peaceably the weight that is laid upon it, without considering any one circumstance of, from whom, or upon what occasion, or what provocation, or any other, that can raise any uncasiness: It considers all that can moderate, sweeten, and give strength, and nothing that is likely to exasperate: And whenever disquieting thoughts occur (as very often they do, and even pres-

fing with great violence) the only concern is, not to look at, or give any attention to them; but to cast them off with the same violence as they come; regarding them as the effect of the devil's envy, who, under the cover of making apologies, and a reafonable defence, defigns to deprive the foul of the merit of its suffering, and disturb it with noise, anger, and confusion. In the management of these thoughts is the great art of patience; for if the least favour be shewn them; if the mind be permitted to work upon them; if attention be given to the usual remonstrances, to the pleading and reafonings, which are pressed with the evidence of demonstration from infinite topics, these never fail of raising so much heat and storm, that the difficulty of the first provocation is doubled, and more than ordinary strength is necessary for overcoming it, now improved by the subtilty of passion and ingenious indifcretion. For this reason difcreet patience stands ever ready to suppress these thoughts, and whatever reasons appear, concludes it can be never reasonable to increase its own difficulties, and add to the weight of its burthen, which already it can fcarce stand under without danger of fink-

As patience is careful to check the first thoughts of passion, so likewise to govern the tongue; so that whatever the inclination be to complain or murmur it absolutely forbids all communication of the prefent uneafinefs, especially to such persons as are likely, by their indifcretion or flattery, to join with the passion already moved, and thew the unreasonableness of the provocation. In this patience is rigoroufly cautions; because it is sensible, that most perfons, though friends, are in this point either fo weak or imprudent, as to act the knavery of hungry lawyers, who are for magnifying the justice of an ill cause, and study how to widen the breach, instead of composing it; and this being nothing less than blowing up the fire, which is already of itself too fierce. patience fees it quite opposite to the interest of its cause, and therefore lays a strict injunction against it.

What it desires, as most perfect, is to conceal all the uneasiness it feels; and to seek no comfort from the compassion of men; but to leave its cause wholly to God, and wait till he shall please to appear in it, either by sending relief, or manifesting its innocence. This is most conformable to the example of Christ, who being falsely accused before Pilate, stood silent, without answering one word to the charge, and therefore it must be the best copy which is taken from such an original. But if pa-

there can be no farther indulgence granted, than to lay open the fore to fuch a friend, whose prudent charity will, by all manner of lenitives, mollify the sharp and corroding humours, and thus prepare it for a cure; who will inspire courage and strength for supporting the pain, and be never so false as to discover the weakness of the patient to any, much less to those who will either deride or take offence at his complaints.

But the favour of this allowance must not be abused, by making the aggrievance the common subject of their entertaining discourse; for this is not confistent either with patience or prudence; from both which those depart much farther, who to the complaints of their trouble add warm expressions of their resentments, and mix these with bitterness, contempt, or aversion. And what if they cannot fee the person who has injured them, without betraying in their looks and words the poison of their heart, and therefore forbear all usual expressions even of a heathen civility? Nothing of this can be reconciled with patience, whilst this is not bearing troubles with peace and firmness of mind, but yielding under the diforder, and flewing the weakness of passion. This is not suffering injuries, but being moved and exasperated by them, and following

the suggestions of a disturbed mind: This is complying with impatience, and giving it the rule, instead of suppressing it, as duty requires. And it is as little agreeable to prudence; because a man is never more likely to commit indifcretions, than when impatience raifing undue heats within, draws up fuch thick vapours, as bring reason under a cloud, and hinder it from difeerning or making a true judgment of any thing before it. Patience therefore being fo very necessary, that without it a Christian cannot live peaceably either with God or man, I could wish all of this profession would ferioully confider this necessity, and convinced by the fense of their own interest, take true pains in advancing in it; the advantage would fully recompense the labour of gaining it, and the fruit of peace would encourage them still to go on.

O God, thou knowest this necessity, and how little sensible we are of it; help us, we beseech thee, in this point, and it will be a help in many, whilst all that belongs to salvation depends on this; for we know, that without patience we cannot possess our souls. See then our misery, and have compassion; teach us to bear with all evils, except that of sin; teach us to have patience under present evils, that we may escape those which

are eternal.

5 them Minister

Eleventh SUNDAY after PENTECOST.

THERE can be no patience, but with a contradiction to nature, which is ever inclined to vexation, fretting, anger, and revenge; and though the great interest we have in preserving our inward peace, be a strong motive for preventing these ill effects; yet such is our weakness, that we stand in need of some better helps, such as faith affords us, for securing that peaceable temper which belongs to the professors of the Gospel of Christ; and what these helps are, we will now consider.

The first is the example of Jesus Christ, who suffering many and great injuries, salse accusations, and torments for our sakes, has by this merited at our hands, that with answerable love we be grateful to him; and by bearing but a short time our cross with patience, we shew ourselves conformable to his life and actions as much as in us lies. This is the great encouragement to patience, made use of by the apostles to the faithful of their time, and to us in them. Hear St Paul; Let us run with patience the race that is set before us; looking upon Jesus, the author

and finisher of our faith, who for the joy set before bim, endured the cross, despiting the Shame, and is set at the right band of his Father. Consider therefore him, who endured such contradiction from sinners against himself, that you be not tired, and faint in your minds; for you have not yet refifted unto blood, striving against sin, Heb. xii. 1. Hear it again from St. Peter, who requires Christians to suffer with patience; because Christ suffered for us, leaving you an example, that you should follow his steps, who committed no fin, neither was deceit found in his mouth; who when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, threatened not; but committed himself to him who judges according to justice; who did bear our fins in his body upon the crofs, that we, being dead to fin, might live to justice; by whose stripes we bave been bealed, 1 Pet. ii. 21. Upon the same head are we invited to patience in other epiftles of the New Testament; and having here the example of all kinds of fuffering, both in reputation, liberty, and life; both from friends and enemies; both from mistake, blindness, and malice; and these falling upon a spotless Lamb, whose only crime was innocence, and charity to man; we have in this, all that can give life to patience; and while we have made choice of him for our master and our guide, we can

except against no sort of trials; for where can the exception be, when we cannot be true to our profession, if we are not ever in rea-

diness of giving our blood.

A fecond help is from the confideration of those promises God has made to such as fuffer with patience; the whole scripture is full of them, but especially the New Testa. ment, which pronounces repeated bleffings, and even eternal rest in the possession of God to those that suffer tribulations with patience, and that the present forrow shall be turned into joy. Now God being faithful to his promises, and infinitely just in satisfying whatever engagements his goodness has made; this ought to raise up the spirit of Christians under the severest afflictions; the prospect of relief being a general comfort to all that are in trouble, and the confideration of a reward being that which sweetens labours, and gives courage amidst dangers. How much reason have Christians to be comforted in all they fuffer, and to persevere with courage; when they have the affurance from infallible truth, that their troubles shall not last; that they shall have relief; that unfpeakable joys shall succeed their forrows, and that God himself will be the reward of their labours? It was the faith of these promises worked so strongly upon St Paul, that he found the effects of them in the midst of his trials, so as even in tribulation to overflow with joy. The like effect they had in the martyrs of Christ, who, like the apostles, rejoiced that they were thought worthy to suffer, and carried this joy through all their torments. Hence St Chrysoftom declares it a greater favour of heaven to fuffer for Christ, than to raise the dead and work miracles; because there, says he, I am the debtor; but here Christ is a debtor to me, Pro Christo pati munus est majoris admiratio-nis, quam sit re verà mortuos excitare, & signa miranda patrare; nam illic quidem debitor fum, hic vero debiterem habeo Christum, Hom. iv. in Ep. ad Phil. And I think we have all fo great an interest in heaven, and so many hazards in coming to it, that whatever can be a help to us, ought to be esteemed not so much our trouble as our joy; and what then must it be, where we have God's word for our encouragement, his goodness to promise, and his justice to sulfil the promises? Where can our faith be, if this be no comfort? When we are on a journey of concern, is it not a comfort to have affurance of being in the right way? And though there be trouble in a ftorm; is there not comfort too, when by it we make better way to our port? Afflictions are the way to heaven, and if a storm, yet are such as, with patience, carry us most fecurely forward in our way.

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A third help is in confidering the more immediate effects defigned by Almighty God in all afflictions, proper for advancing us towards the last end of happiness: As, First, In permitting here many troubles, that by them we may be convinced of the vanity of all earthly comforts, and from this fensible knowledge may learn to raise our hearts to the defire of a better life, and to feek fuch comforts as cannot fail. Those who observe how much earthly enjoyments divert the heart from heaven, and what difficulties those have in leaving the world, who admire it, will eafily find the bleffing of a great mercy in all those troubles and losses, by which we are taught to despise it. The world must be left, and is it not a mercy then to find fo little comfort in it, as not only to be willing, but even to defire to leave it? This mercy, O God, I earnestly defire, and let it come whatever way thou knowest most expedient for me.

adly, By permitting afflictions, that by them we may obtain that true wisdom of knowing not only the world, but ourselves, our weakness, our sins, and our dependence on God. How many had never known God, had not vexation given them understanding, as it was in Nabuchadonosor? How many that know God had never known their sins, had

not affliction brought them to the sense of them, as in the children of Israel, Joseph's brethren, and the prodigal son? And now every day, how does every trial help to open our eyes, and shew us how much we want of patience, how much of humility, how much of the true spirit of Christ; and by discovering our wants, inform us of the necessity of seeking help from him, who is the only helper in the time of distress?

sally, By giving us an opportunity of making fin-offerings of all our afflictions; it being most certain, that if we submit to the difficulties of life, as to the scourge with which God punishes our sins; this acknowledgment of our unworthiness and God's justice, proceeding from a contrite heart, is a most effectual means of turning God's anger from us, and obtaining not only pardon of our sins, but likewise a discharge from all the punishment due to them.

Lastly, By teaching us to submit to the will of God: It is in this one point is centered the practice of a Christian life; so that God can never be far from them, who make the will of God the rule of their life, without having regard to the inclinations of their own. And where is this better taught, than in time of suffering, when a person being carried contrary to his own will, thus

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comes to be convinced, that there is another will which governs; that this will being all-powerful, there is a necessity of submitting to it; that, it being all-wise, it is best for him to submit to it; that it being infinitely good and just, there can be no exceptions against it; that all his good both here and hereafter depending wholly upon it, he cannot possibly expect any true comfort or blessing, but by an entire submission to it. Hence is he effectually taught to bow down to God, to confess all his appointments to be just, to adore his justice even when it strikes, and to own that nothing can be better, than that the will of God be done in him.

By these and other like motives may Christians prevail upon their inclinations, so as to give a check to their passions, and there suffer with patience, where all seems prepared to break forth into a storm. Happy they who are masters of this Christian art; and happy those too who are every day taking pains to learn it. The blessings attending and following it are worth all the labour; and though it should prove seven years work, yet it will be more to the purpose, than whatever else is learned by such an apprenticeship. It is the privilege of patience to make martyrs even in the peace of

the church. Habet & pan ecclefic martyres fuos. And what is this, but the next shep to a crown? But it is thou, O Jelus, must be the author of this grace, who halt taught it by thy example, and are pleased thyself to be the recompence of it. Strengthen therefore, we beleech thee, us thy fervante; help us by patience here to possess our souls, and by patience carry us on through all trials, till we come to the possession of thee. will-inco be enough to more that pation,

which I propole to lay; and at to the city will judify manufacturanding, and the had realon to insik of capations of colors bed

fulfied I atust take notice of feirful figures. the End, Of their impatience which breaks forth into a form of freaing curling, cathe, and increcations. That christians who a decline, the ill golden. have reason to take the instance ing teaching it face they cannot be to over it has those any things that, is appet acqueing to the foint of the Golpel, that it is concernation of claims of the Golpel; the grade wind them of claims a formulal to the mask, in a constitute low.

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Tim Romeno

Twelfib Sunday ofter Pentecostrada

THOUGH what has been already faid of patience, be fufficient to make this judgment; that impatience is not agreeable to the principles of the Gospel; yet confidering how general a failing this is, if I add something more in particular, I hope it will not be enough to move that passion, which I propose to lay; and if it does, this will justify my understanding, and show I had reason to speak of impatience. On this subject I must take notice of several degrees.

As, First, Of that impatience, which breaks forth into a storm of swearing, cursing, oaths, and imprecations. Those christians who are subject to this ill custom, have reason to take pains in reforming it; since they cannot but know, if they know any thing, that it is not according to the spirit of the Gospel; that it is contrary to the Gospel; that it is contrary to the Gospel; that it is a violation of charity, a scandal to the weak, ill example to the unwary, a prophanation of God's holy name, and taking part even with the devil, in bringing heaven, and all that is sacred, into contempt, and therefore, that it can no more be tolerated where Christ is professed,

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than the worship of Boal or Dagon upon the altar of the living God. For youth therefore to learn this custom, is to learn to renounce their baptism; for men to live in the tolerated practice of it, is to live confederate with hell; and for thofe, who upon cultom only, and without any defigne thus prophanely express their impatience, they are under the fame guilt with the former, if they are not industriously folicitous to difengage themselves from that evil, to which they are yet flaves of custom. And though it must be allowed, that there is difficulty in overcoming such a custom; yet it must be owned too, that it may be overcome; and where it is not, the only reason must be, because there is not a due solicitude upon the foul; it is not fufficiently watchful, just pains are not used for gaining the victory. And hence their plea is not to be allowed as good, who pretend they would do it if they could; for this is no more than an excuse for floth, and the argument of those, who as yet are not truly in earnest.

adly, There is another impatience of those, who, though forbearing all feandalous expreffions, yet eafily break forth into pattion upon ordinary provocations; who cannot bear either reproof from superiors, or contradiction from equals, not fee any thing

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done difagreeable to their order, way, or humour, but prefently all is in diforder, heats arise within, pride swells the brealt, then clouds appear, and a storm falls upon the next that comes in the way. All this is far from the spirit of the Gospel, which prescribes meekness and moderation in all fuch cases, and does not allow of anger, even where there is just occasion for it; but in such a way, as to be without sin; the anger therefore of a christian is not to be the anger of pride or passion; and when these begin to swell, his first business is to correct himself, and not think of reproving others faults, till he can do it without a greater fault of his own. Passion is never a good minister of justice, and therefore, till he has gained peace within, he ought not to think himself qualified for giving reproof. This may be thought losing time, and giving opportunity for the growth of disorders; but the justice and better success of a calmer reproof, will abundantly recom-pence all fuch delay. In all other provoca-tions, impatience is as little warrantable, for that it is generally unjust, both in the conftructions and judgments it makes, and in its own refentment; and always carrying the foul out of the ways of humility and fubmission, deprives it of all the advantage

defigned in the better use of its troubles. Then as to the injury it does by its unreasonable heats, this is known only to God; for that it is seldom seen by us, how much of uneafinels, folicitude, dejection and discouragement it causes in others; and it is as little known, what are the ill effects of these disquiets, both upon soul and body. But however, there is that justice in this evil, that it punishes those, who do this mischief to others; fince mind and body fuffer from its corroding humours, and their reputation, whether of piety, courage or difcretion, cannot be great, who are subject to this weakness. But besides many others, a confiderable mischief is, in impoling silence on their best friends, in such occasions, where it might be much for their good to have them speak. I mean, when their circumstances requires the charity of a friend to advise them, and put them in mind of such overfights, as they observe not in themselves. For here, while friends see them of an impatient and jealous humour, fuch as makes an ill use of good advice; how often are these discouraged from their pious designs, and omit the part both of friendship and charity, upon the apprehension of doing mischief by it, through their indisposition, who cannot bear it? This I let down with a

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particular remark, as having often feen the experience of it; wherefore I cannot but recommend it in general to all: That, upon receiving advice or hint of micarriage from any friend, they would be moderate, without discovering either anger, or dislike, or melancholy, or jealousy; for that the symptoms of such an ill temper may discourage all like attempts for the future, and be the occasion of leaving them to the effects of their own oversights or indiscretion. I confess, it ought not to be so; but so weak is the charity of most, and such a mixture of self-love there is with the best friendship, that there is but too much reason to apprehend, that silence will be the effect of abused charity.

charity.

3dly, There is another impatience, which, instead of speaking too much, speaks too little; and this is the effect sometimes of melancholy, sometimes of a sullen pride, and both ways is to be reproved as unchristian. First, For the great injury it does those, who thus nourish poison in their own breast, such as causes an universal disorder in the soul, and hinders it from the quiet performance of all spiritual duties; and then works into so many unjust reasonings, rash censures, and groundless jealousies, that it is a question, whether charity be not lost with

their peace. zdly, For the injury done to others, fince a discontented filence is taken by those who think themselves concerned, as a formed anger, and proves sufficient occasion for a thousand imaginary discontents and uncharitable reasonings; when many times there is nothing more than mistakes on both sides, such as by a moderate and peaceable conference might have been prevented upon the first appearance of the misunderstanding. Wherefore I must set this down not only as impatience, but as indiscretion too, since it has so much ill management in it.

has fo much ill management in it.

Arbly, There is another impatience, in presently shewing resentments upon any word let fall by company, as if it were a resection, or designed assent upon them; and hence engaging in uncharitable disputes, and improving a jest or light word into contention. This impatience is mixt with jealously, and very often with indiscretion, and upon all accounts is reprovable. A little patience with some management, is to be the remedy: It being no matter of dissiculty to pass by a resection, either as not understood, or not levelled at them, or even to turn it by with a jest, such as discovers neither guilt nor contern. And what is this but to prescribe either silence or a smile? And is it not great

imprudence to receive a wound, when for little is required for putting by the stroke?

5thly, There is another impatience in being often peevish and fretful, and so to speak to others, as if there was always a wafp upon the tongue. I will own, this may be no more than ill custom, or the effect of indisposition or temper, and therefore may deferve from others both compassion and patience: But I must say too, that it is not edifying, and therefore cannot but recommend to all, who profess religion and piety, that they would be watchful against it; especially those who have any degree of superiotity; for that to be so often snapping and biting gives ill example, and are qualities, which fuit not with the Iweetness and mild nels of the christian temper. We love it not in others; why should we bear it in our felves? w train at ships which the

Lastly. There is an impatience in regard of ourselves, in not bearing the trouble of our own infirmities, imperfections, relapses, the difficulties of amendment, or darkness of our state. Piety and good desires are generally at the bottom of this, but they are very ill managed; since next to wilful sin, there is nothing more prejudicial to the service of God, than this impatience; whilst it unqualisses all for making a true judgment of them-

felves, involves them in endless troubles, and indisposes for all that is spiritual. The remedy of this must be patience, meekness of spirit, and following the advice of a good director; these, by degrees, will bring comfort and patience with them; and such as will not be persuaded to make use of them, have not yet learned by their suffering to be wife.

These are some particulars of impatience, some worse than others, and yet all bad enough. I wish all the professors of the Gospel would seriously look upon them with all the ill effects, that generally attend them; they would certainly see so much disagreeable to the life of Christ, as to give them a dislike and draw confusion from the daily practice of what renders them so unlike their master. O God, increase this their confusion, till by daily labour they work their souls into a better disposition, and by patience shew whose disciples they are.



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Common Sunnay after Porte

Thirteenth Sunday offer Pentecost.

DESIDES the virtues hitherto mentioned, there are still many other ingredients to make up the good christian. One of theleis constancy, which is a firmness of mind, mot only in fuffering, but likewife in doing whatevery God exacts from us; fo as to go on steadily with duty, without being diverted either by our own sloth, solicitude, melancholy, or by the slatteries or terrors of the world. This short description of constancy shews christians, how much in earnest they ought to be in what they have undertaken; and that to profess the name of Christ and his Gospel to join in a form of religion, to make a shew of holiness, either in habit, or words, or any outward ceremonies, is nothing to the purpose, if the heart be not to truly possessed with God, and the love of him, as to be fincere in feeking him, and in earnest in whatever his holy will demands from them.

This must be the interior disposition of every christian, that desires to be saved; and the foundation of it must be in the sincerity of their faith: Whence they are not to content themselves with a hasty repetition of

their creed, and is duperfinial profession of their believing it; as likewife of whatever the Gospel teaches; for all this may be not more, than the effect of education or cuftom; and as speaking a language they have been bred up to from their childhood; but if they think of living christians they multi weigh the import of the words, and confider, whether the faith of what they profess with their lips, be really and truly in their hearts. They must consider, when ther they have an affored faith of God, and of an eternity to come; that happiness will be the recompence of the just, and hell the punishment of the wicked; that heaven is worth all their labour; that if they miscarry, they are of all creatures the most miserable; that they must certainly miscarry, if they love and feek this world, and not God; if they live in a finful state, and either despite all the means of repentance, or are fo infincere in the use of them, as seldom to go beyond the ceremonial part. If the heart be possessed with a real faith of these particulars, and other branches belonging to them, this faith will be the best foundation sfor that constancy which must carry chrisvians through all the difficulties of life, and through the necessary trials of virtue; this faith will especially establish them against the

dangers of fin; it will oblige them to be in earnest in the use of such remedies, as Godin has appointed for the pardon of fini; and it will make them cheerfully purfue those ways, which withdraw the foul from the world and lead it nearer to God: And whoever can but come to a confrancy of mindoing these points, needs not question, but he haso all that, which is necessary for a future state.

The first part of constancy is against the dangers of fin; this belongs to every christian, or because all live in this danger; and if there be not fuch a firmness of foul, as to keep it? steady against all the folicitations of whatevered pleases, and the apprehensions of all that is terrifies, there can be no fecurity against the worst of evils. Now a sincere faith is the best help to this; for when a foul has this en principle well fettled in it, that its only good d is the possession of God; and its only real to misfortune is to be eternally separated from him, this will help it to despise the most powerful charms of the world, and likewife all, that is frightful in it. For when a short of recollection has moderated the violence of the first impressions, and given it opportunity of taking the true measures of things from this principle thus fixt in the heart, here presently the soul begins to raise itself, and, by the light of faith fettles these conclusions; or

that the most pleasing objects, which flames fense and inclination, but in the enjoyment evidently hazard its separation from Godged can have nothing cruly defirable, for truly valuable in them: That whatever evils are w mission, ware the most assured means for coming to the possession of God, have no things of real unhappiness in them, but are more to be coveted than feared. Thefe conclusions being fixt above dispute or doubt, here the foul makes a true judgment both of its natural defires and fears; that they are both equally the effect of a corrupt nature, and both alike to be despised; that, to regard and be directed by thefe, is in fact to renounce its faith, and not to act as a chriftian, but as an unbeliever; and therefore, that it cannot possibly be in earnest in what it professes to believe, if it does not renounce these, and act according to what it believes.

Thus faith is the root of a christian life, and constancy is the fruit that grows upon it; for when the foul is thus possessed, it stands firm, as upon a rock, against all assaults. For though there be still something inviting to nature in riches, in honour, in the esteem of the world, in its satisfactions and pleasures, yet how little a way can this invitation go, when it sees its eternal good either.

wholly loft, or very much hazarded by them? This confideration quite changes the property of them; fo that what to nature feems defirable, to faith appears contemptible. Hence the faithful foul paffes by all worldly folicitations, or with refolution rejects them; finding more of horror than attractive, in all that which pleases for a moment, but leads to eternal death; and wonders, how men, who fay they have reason and faith. can admire those, as real goods, and embrace them with joy, which they believe must foon be followed with their everlasting confusion. Upon the fame principle, the faithful foul finds a joy of faith under all the evils of this life : because it less them helps ful in difengaging the heart from the love of the world, and raising it to the defines of a better; and as for all these perfecutions, which are raifed against her, because of her fidelity to justice and truth, the fees enough in these to embrace them with joy, fince she knows this is the way of the crofs, which leads to glory, and that a crown of blifs is the fruit of fuch thorns. odla this manner constancy follows upon a lively faith, and confirms the foul against the dangers of fin, keeping it fleady to duty in all extremes. But if its unhappiness has been such, as to fall under the guilt of fin, constancy has

here its effect too, in obliging the christian to be in earnest in the use of fuch means; as God dras appointed for the pardon of fini Hence the christian that is influenced by constancy, does not only go through the form of repentance, by examining the state of his confeience, confeshing his fins, defining absolution, and performing the penance enjoined and but is folicitous, First, To do this well, that is, with fuch a fincere forrow for fin, as to hope, that what is forgiven on earth, may be forgiven in heaven; and then with the same fincerity pursues his resolutions of amendment, and of beginning a new life. Is For this end, he frequently calls to mind his fins, confiders the engagements he made, and the conditions upon which he received absolution, and daily examines whether he uses due care in fatisfying those engagements, and complying with the conditions; because he knows, that God is not to be macked to that true repentance is not only a confession of fin, but an obligation of using due endeavours for amendment and that if he be not folicitous in fatisfying this obligation, he has just reason to quotion his fincerity, and to fear, that his repentance was conly ceremonially but not from the heart and confequently, that he still lies undernative full iguilty of his former fine Hearth's confideration his repentance ends not with absolution, but appears more sensible afterwards, in all the care necessary for gaining upon past failings, and preventing their return. And though great watch fulness and labour may be necessary for this, in standing against the force of corruption, in overcoming a rebellious nature, and a perverse world, and in separating from the occasions of fin; yet constancy built on a firm faith carries him through these difficulties; because he knows, that fin separates from God; that repentance is the only remedy of fin, and that there can be no repentance, where there are not due end deavours used for overcoming and fortaking fin.

The fame help the good christian has in all the ways, that lead nearer to God; for when he reflects, that he was created for the possession of God, there is no true latisfaction, but in advancing towards that end. He sees it is nonsense to profess christianity, and not to live so in the practice of its rules, as to have just hopes of coming to the end of religion: He sees it is childrens-play to pretend to salvation, and not to do what is necessary for obtaining it. Hence having a knowledge of his duties, and of the means of salvation, he makes it his business, not

only to perform them as to the ceremony; but in such a manner, that may be helpful towards his last end: Thus he endeavours to pray, bthus to falt, thus to follow the directions of the Golpel, in first feeling the kingdom of God and its justice. And as to all the difficulties that appear, he always fays, heaven is worth all my labour; where is my faith aif I give up the cause of heaven. for the difficulties of gaining it? Where is my reason, if professing to seek God, and knowing this to be my only interest. I let trifles quite put me out of the way, and expose my soul to endless misery, for fear, of making flesh uneasy for a moment? Thus he goes on with constancy; and may this, O God, be the method of thy fervants; let it be the effect of a lively faith to establish them against the dangers of sin, to be in earnest in the means of recovering from its, guilt, and in overcoming all the difficulties. which meet them in the way of falvation. Such a constancy may bring them to a crown, but without it, who can give them rules;) and that equilibries of remine fragod

end of religion. Hellers is as challens plays to prefend to relivation, and then to down has is decellarly for although it. There having a knowledge the life of the ments of the beautiful the

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Fourteenth SUNDAY offer PENTECOST.

Le cule for making here any addition concerning inconstancy; but this being a general unhappiness, which is the disappointment of so many good purposes and religious designs, it can be no dif-service to christianity to speak

more directly of it.

What the mischiefs of inconstancy are is too evident in the lives of most christians whilft wherever there is a faith of a life to come, and yet not due care used in providing for it, inconstancy has still a share in the miscarriage; it is true, some are so lost to all that is good, that the despair of amendment puts by the thoughts of attempting it; but, as to the far greater number, they not only think, but likewife purpose and resolve upon a change; but of all these, how sew are they, who carry on their purposes fo far, as to accomplish what they defign? Let every one confider himself, and see, if he is not one. And why is it? Do we not know our duty? Are we not fenfible what our fins are? Do we not forefee the ill confequences of them? Do we not conclude upon the necessity of our amendment; and not

only resolve upon it, but likewise frequently undertake it? And why is it not effected; but after so many proposals and attempts, the work is still undone, and we are yet what we were? Is not the general reason of this, because we have not steadiness enough to go on with what we undertake; and for want of constancy leave our work unfinished? Here is our great misfortune, we are fubject to a kind of lightness and uncertainty in all the faculties of our foul, though some much more than others; a little ferious confideration lays before us the unhappinels of a finful state, convinces us of our intolerable neglects; and how often is it, that from what we read and hear, we feem for fentibly moved, as if now nothing could possibly happen to prevent or even delay the amendment? So far the weakest go; and where there are but the least feeds of piety, how often, upon fuch lively impressions, do these shoot forth into fighs and tears? And who now would not expect some considerable change from such encouraging promises? And yet let but some new object occur; let there be but a change of place, of company, of business, or entertainment, and the former ideas are so weaks ened, if not quite effaced, that now there appears nothing in the foul, capable of giving a check to those inclinations, which

were but fo lately condemned as the cause of its unhappiness. This is our condition, and lo truly milerable it is in persons, who are halfening to eternity, and can have no prof-pect of happiness but upon an effectual change of their lives, that we have reason to lament it, and to allow no truce to our grief, till it be followed with a fettled resolution, of making it our daily business to become more ferious in a concern whereon our eternity

depends.

If this be not done, how vain must our hopes be; fince upon looking well into them. they are no more, than a fight of our unhappiness, without endeavours for putting ourielyes in a better flate? And what will this avail us? What help can it be to us, if we discover the infinite workings of our pride, in admiring ourselves, in seeking to be admired by others, and in the contempt of those, who will not flatter us? What if we fee ourselves under the violence of finful pasfions, and by them frequently drawn into fin! What if we observe our souls engaged in fo much worldly folicitude, as to attend little to the work of our falvation? What if we are convinced of a general neglect of eternity being our fault; of being under the government of floth; of the love of eale and appe-tite; of admiring all that is vain; of being earnest in all that is to please ourselves, and seldom serious in what belongs to God? What help I say, can there be in making this observation of ourselves, if we let it be no more than the subject of a passing sight, and still keep on our course? Can this sight of our misery give us hopes of mercy? If the traveller sees a precipice before him, and upon this expresses his concern; if he stands a while, looks about him, considers which way to avoid the danger; and yet presently goes on again, will this foresight of danger prevent his fall? If the pilot discovers rocks before him, is troubled at the sight, sees which way to steer with safety, and yet still holds on his course, will this prevent his ship-wreck?

If this be no help in either case, but the fight of the danger aggravates the neglect with the infamy of folly and madness; what must it be in circumstances of a much higher concern; when christians, seeing their present unhappiness, seeing precipices and rocks before them, so that everlasting death must be their fate, if they go on, however keep on still their usual course, and let the interpution of a few serious thoughts serve for no more, than to be a future evidence against themselves, that their misery is not missorouse, but their choice? This is certainly the

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general case of all, that live on in a state of fin; for these cannot but acknowledge, they have a sense of being in an ill way; the glimpse of divine light, which at times glances upon them, shews them the guilt of their pride and ambition, of their covetoulnefs, frauds and injustice, of their prodigality, sensuality and intemperance, of their fondness of the world, forgetfulness and neg-lect of God, and departing from the ways of the Gospel. All this they own in the confession of their weakness, and in their imperfect repentance. But where is the change? They go on still as before; and what is this, but to run on upon rocks and precipices, which they see before them? The point then is clear, that their misery is not to be placed to their want of fenfe; but to a certain lightness and inconstancy of mind, which makes them falle to themselves, and unfleady in a matter, which requires the greatest steadiness.

But if inconstancy be the occasion of misery, how is it to be remedied? The remedy must be the same, as in things, that are ever moving or floating; all endeavours must be used to fix them; for till such means be found out, they will certainly move and float still. Things that are light, cannot be expected to abide long in one

place, but will be carried about as the wind blows; and fet boats in what part of the niver you please, if they are not fallened, they will be born away with the stream: It is the same with the minds of men; let them be turned towards God by prayer; let them be touched with a sense of their fins; let them have a true fight of their prefent milery, and think of quitting it; this will fignify lit-tle, if they are not by due means rendered stable and fixt; for with the next wind that blows, or with the next current they meet. they will again be carried away. Hence it is. that prayers and confessions are so little to the purpose in such great numbers; they have their minds as light as straws, through that vanity and felf-love, with which they are affected; they have their hearts as unfettled, as boats adrift, through the many passions to which they are subject; and they think of fettling all right by some formal prayers and confessions of custom; suppose they do, what can this fignify if still their minds and hearts are left under all their former lightness and unsettledness? This is no more than the lettling boats or fraw, without care to fix them; and how long can this last, but only till the next wind that blows, or the next motion of the water ?at? nity in Bom at

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I say then, that christians must make it their busines, First. To remedy the light-ness and inconstancy of their minds, and then some fruit may be expected of their other pious exercises, with just hopes of being delivered from their fine; but this fettlement can no otherwise be, than by fixing the heart on fomething immovable, that is on God; for till the heart, which of itself is light and changeable, be linked to that which is unchangeable, it must still be subject to the effects of its own natural weakness, and ever be exposed to the uncertainty of winds and streams. This I know is to prefcribe a great and laborious work, even the change of the whole man : But what remedy? If man be fo difordered, that through a certain lightness of mind, he is likely to finish nothing he undertakes for his eternal good, this lightness must be removed, or else he can have no other prospect, but of being loft; and if the remedy be hard, yet it is worth the pains. To tell me therefore of persons being daily at their prayers, and often at the facraments, whose hearts are as vain as the world can make them; and asking pardon of their fins, without thoughts of remedying that inconstancy of mind, which is one cause of all their fins, is to tell me of persons labouring as much in vain, as those who

who complain of quick filver being unmanageable without taking any care to fix it. The mind therefore is to be fixt; but by what method this is to be effected, must be remitted to the following Sunday. In the mean time, let us all with humility acknowledge whatever degree we have of inconstancy, by which we are so often put by our best resolutions, and leave those undertakings unfinished which are most for our eternal good; let us beg pardon for the many times we have mocked heaven by our insincere and barren purposes; and now, with all the earnestness of our souls, pray for grace to be established against all such weakness.

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N last Sunday was determined the subject of this, and that is, to enquire by what method is to be remedied that our usual inconstancy of mind, by which we are diverted from the profecution of our best refolutions we make for our eternal good. The case has been already determined in general; That if inconstancy be our disease, the remedy must be, in rendering our minds more fixt as to good. But how is this to be effected in particular? By taking away the cause of our distemper; for this is to make a substantial cure. Now in our case the cause is evidently above dispute; That our incon-Itancy proceeds from a weakness of mind, by which it is eafily moved by every thing that touches it, and therefore can never long be fixt on God. It is too eafy in receiving imfrom what is earthly, and being always exposed to such objects, hence the thoughts of heaven can never long sublist, because they are presently thrust out by the next, that occur, and hence the foul is ever unlettled in what is good. Means therefore must be found to establish the heart against the impressions of earthly goods, and thus the thoughts of heaven will become more lasting.

The first help for this must be, by taking fome time every day for lerioully thinking on the method of our lives; it is want of confidering is the occasion of our lightness, and it is by serious consideration we must begin to be more settled. The points therefore to be considered are, First, Whether we in earnest defire to fave our fouls? 2dly, Whether we can reasonably hope for salvation, if we use not the means for obtaining it? 3dly, Whether the love of the world, and fpending our lives in running after its follies, vanities and fatisfactions, be the means prescribed for gaining heaven? 4thly, Whether indulging our corruption, gratifying our passions and perverse inclinations, be a proper means for falvation? 5thly, Whether making it our daily business to please ourselves in all our natural desires, and to become daily more and more sensual and worldly, be the way to approach to God?

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If these points be daily and duly weighed, we cannot fail of being convinced, that nothing of all this can help us towards hea-ven; that the more we favour ourselves in these points, the farther we are from all hopes of salvation; that the more we make these our business, the more pains we take

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to be damned. And if we are convinced of this, must not then this become a settled principle in our soul; That all those things of the world, which court our senses, our inclinations, and our passions, are the greatest cheats; that they are the worst of enemies; that they only flatter us to ruin us? If we can come thus far, will not this be some help not to be so easily moved by them? For whatever their invitation be; yet when we research, it is no more than the invitation of cheats, of enemies, of poisson, of death and everlasting misery; this must necessarily mix the inclination with sear and horror, and be a daily restraint upon the rational soul, which cannot but blush at its sondness of those things, which by pleasing shadows draw it into eternal slames.

When due confideration has seasoned the soul with these truths, then the thoughts must of course advance to a farther enquiry: As, First, Whether Christ being our master and example, we are not to learn the way of salvation from him? 2dly, Whether he having taught us, to deny ourselves, to be poor in spirit, to be humble and meek, to be patient, charitable and peaceable, not to love the world, but to watch and pray, to seek first the kingdom of God, and strive to enter by the narrow gate; we are not to judge these

the proper means for faving our fouls? 3dly, Whether we are not to make it our daily business to live and walk according to his direction? 4thly, Whether we can be in earnest in what we profess to believe of another life, if we have peace with ourselves, while we are quite out of the way, which he teaches? 5thly, Whether this life being so inconsiderable in comparison of eternity, we are not to be more solicitous for the future, than present good? 6thly, Whether we are not to look upon all that, as our unhappiness, which pleasing us for the present, puts us in hazard of being eternally miserable?

If the mind be frequently brought to the ferious confideration of these points, it must, by degrees, come to fuch a true fense of its eternal interest, as to be earnest in seeking it, to be afraid of every thing, that is contrary to it, and to have a true value for nothing, but only as it contributes to eternity. And when once it comes to this disposition, then how inconfiderable will the world, with all its fatisfactions and greatness, appear to it? How will these lose their power of raising admiration and defires? And where then can be the danger of that inconstancy, which has hitherto diverted it from the profecution of all good; when now it has not that lightness, by which it was formerly subject to

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we But if the heart, through a long habit of felf-love, proves obstinate against all such confiderations, and feems to receive no impressions from them, then some remedy ought so be applied. Then a spiritual retreat is necessary, where the christian, for some days, being separated from his usual diffipations, may wholly apply his thoughts to find out himfelf, and behold at leifure the unhappy state, in which he is; and by the prescriptions of a skilful hand, be put in a method proper for his recovery. This is a very powerful help, and fo much both of feriousness and resolution is necessary, that the very undertaking it is half the cure; especially, when a more particular affiftance of divine grace may be expected to their endeavours, who thus give proof of being in earnest in their defires of a better flate we all to sature to

Where circumstances will not allow of this expedient in all its strictness, christians however are to come as near it as they can: They must every day have their serious hours; they must have a time for thinking, and making reflection upon the method, in which they live; they must have a time for reading such books, as shall be judged most

K.IV

proper for them; and again, time for confis dering what they have read a Time agains for prayer, time for repentance, and this not only in general, but with a particular review of their diforders, and a ferious deliberation of the means, by which they may be effecmally reformed. Here must be considered, what it is in particular, that most affects the heart, and takes it off from feeking God, and making provision for eternity; and upon the discovery, a resolution must be taken of retrenching all, whatever it be, that daily feeds and strengthens the disorder; for if the foul be under a clog, or linked with chains, the clog must be removed and the chains broken, that the foul may be at liberty for feeking God; if this be not endeavoured, there cannot possibly be any seriousness in the undertaking, but all is delution. And here there must be no regard to inclination, custom, latisfaction, company, or to any confiderations of nature, or the world; for if in these be allowed a dispensing power, there can be no hopes of reforming, whilft these will never want arguments to plead for all that, as necellary, which cannot be forfaken without violence to them. This is the method which the Golpel prescribes, and as some degree of constancy in these exercises is most likely to prove effectual for delivering the K iv

foul from that lightness which renders it unfettled in all that belongs to God; so those who cannot perfuade themselves to undertake it, are most likely to carry their inconstancy with them to the grave, and delay their amendment till there is no more place for it.

Now though it must be owned, there is difficulty in the practice of this method, fince it requires a general felf-denial, and most particularly in those things which are favourites to an indulged inclination; yet this cannot be helped; for if their diftemper cannot be removed, but by fuch ungrateful remedies, their misfortune is in the difeafe, and not in the cure. If they defire to go to heaven, and find themselves very much out of the way, they must take the pains necesfary to recover their falle steps, or else they must never hope to see the right end of their journey. And when all their complaints of difficulties are heard, pray what is there more in the prescription, than what they readily embrace in any acute difease? Does not this confine them? Does is not oblige them to break off the whole course of all that is pleasing to them, both as to table, company, divertisements, and interest? And if fo much be willingly submitted to for their

health; how can it be judged unreasonable for recovering the foul from death, and putting it into the way of life eternal? The unreasonableness then is not in the remedy, but in men; who being mortally fick. would willingly be reftored to health without avoiding those things which nourish their corruption in them. They know themselves under the plague, and would be cured, even while they breath an infected air. They know they fow nothing but tares, and yet would bring forth good corn. They know their fouls lie open to all the defigns of their enemy, yet they will not fet up any fence against him. Now if this unreasonableness was in trivial matters, it were fomething tolerable; but as it is in the concern of eternity, it carries with it the reproach of madness, and under this I must leave it; for they can deserve no better character, who feeing themselves running into the fire, feem concerned, and yet go on still. O God, when wilt thou give a better fense to thy people, such as may put them upon effectually remedying all their weakness!
They see enough to fright them, they know enough to secure them against their sears; but they have no steadiness to pursue what they know; and hence the work of eternity,

though often thought upon, and fometimes undertaken, yet it is with for much flothe fo little attention, and fo many long interruptions, such as oblige them still to begin again, that it is never likely to be finished. Remedy, O God, this evil, and let not thy fervants lie under the deferved reproach of that belongs to then eternal good, much with evidence conclude, there is a necessity of greater Readinets; and that this is not th be expected, except their can come to fuch a degree of leff-denial, as to tland firm amidst rhole folicitations, which now prevail upon them, and put them by the execution of whatever good has propole. For, as too great an indulge the high helve, and too much eafinels in harden whatever fee ans to please, is their ded time, so there can be no remedy, but A to many degrees of felf-denial, as an necollary to ent of the excefs. They who have many to pleaff. and those nice ones too, who multiply their defires according to the solicitude there is to please them, can never be fong at roit! In: must be ever subject to the perpenual rettles. nels of their demands, who are most impost ture with thole, who hamour them wially This is the distracted condition of the condition tians, who give attendance to bill love and other pathons; they are to often cathed upon though eiten thought upon, and tometimes the triple of the street on, and fo many long interruption.

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HOSE, who observe the general in-constancy amongst christians, as to all that belongs to their eternal good, must with evidence conclude, there is a necessity of greater steadiness; and that this is not to be expected, except they can come to fuch a degree of felf-denial, as to fland firm amidst those solicitations, which now prevail upon them, and put them by the execution of whatever good they propose. For, as too great an indulgence of themselves, and too much easiness in following whatever seems to please, is their misfortune, so there can be no remedy, but in fo many degrees of felf-denial, as are necessary to cut off the They who have many to please, excess. and those nice ones too, who multiply their defires according to the folicitude there is to please them, can never be long at rest; but must be ever subject to the perpetual restlessness of their demands, who are most importune with those, who humour them most. This is the distracted condition of those christians, who give attendance to felf-love and other passions; they are so often called upon

in their fervice, that whatever good they undertake, must necessarily be subject to continual interruptions, and so often quite laid by, as it interferes with self-love, which having the command, is impatient of all that which makes it uneasy, and seems to have designs against it. Here being the rise of all inconstancy, there can be no help, but in bringing self-love and all passions under government; for when this is effected, the soul is then at liberty of carrying on whatever it proposes, and without danger of being diverted by those evils, which now can only murmur, but have not strength to rebel.

Self-denial then must be the expedient, by which all those, who are sensible of their inconstancy, must come to a better temper. For since all the distraction of the mind arises from the importunity of the passions, which are ever restless, and the more uneasy still, the more they are obeyed; there can be no rational proposals of remedying this evil, which gives the disturbance, but by abating its strength, and restoring reason and faith to their right of commanding so as not to be subject to the usurpation of self-love, nor deseated in their proposals of virtue by the violence of passion.

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The confideration of the distemper shews the necessity of this method; for fince all our inclinations are depraved by fin, they are as fo many weights upon the foul which bend it always downward; they are as fo many deceitful guides, ever carrying it out of the way; they are as fo many false lights, always putting it upon wandering: Now though every object to which they invite, be not always finful, but many times fuch as is necessary, as eating, drinking, sleeping, &c. many times such as are innocent, as in regard of divertisements, business, company, friends, children, &c. yet even in these and all other like cases, our inclinations are so unhappy, that they ever run to excess: So that what is innocent, (and even necessary in the moderation in which it is allowed) with a little indulgence, foon becomes finful in the abuse. And here is still the much greater unhappines, as has been already hinted, that the more we favour our inclinations in any excess, the farther they run into excess; and not only so, but they ever gain strength by being favoured; so that what at first was no more than inclination, at length becomes a kind of violence; and cannot be withstood, but with another violence. And here is still another addition of unhappiness, that, as our inclinations grow

in strength, so, in proportion; our reason and faith, which should command them, become more languishing and weak; so that, when absolute violence is necessary to suppress them, there is still less strength, to stand against them. In these circumstances, though the sense of duty is not so lost, but that many attempts may be made for recovering what is lost; yet while the passions are thus vigorous, it is generally with so little success, that it seems no more than the inconsiderable rallying of a broken army, which serves for nothing, but to discover their weakness.

Now this being the case of all mankind; what must those christians do, who think in earnest of being steady in the practice of a virtuous life? The point is clear: Either they must resolve upon denying their inclinations, or else give up their cause as lost. If they think of approaching to God, they must resist all that, which divides them at a greater distance from him; they must not join with the Philistines, if they desire the Israelites should overcome. The cause of virtue is contrary to all our inclinations of nature; for whilst these lead into all that is sinful, virtue leads to God: And are inclinations then to be favoured or resisted? The Cospel leaves nothing to be disputed in this

case. The rule there is general; If any one will come after me, says Christ, let him deny himself, and take up his cross and follow me, Mat. xvi. 24. We are to deny ourselves, if we desire to be Christ's disciples; the condition is fixed, and must be observed. Hence the Apostle requires all to put off the old man, with the acts, and put on the new. This must be; for while we find all that is within us bending towards evil, and that all indulgence increases our corruption, we can no otherwise hope to have Christ formed in us, or be in a capacity of following him, than by subduing and breaking the force of all that is in us, which is contrary to him.

This must be effected by denying ourselves, that is, by doing what God requires of us without any regard to our own will, whether it be pleased or displeased; for this is to act with reverence only to God's will, and independent of our own; and as this acknowledges all power and holiness in God, and gives him the homage, that is due; so it, in fact, declares our own will to be perverse and blind, and brings it under the contempt of no regard being due to it, in whatever it desires or dislikes. This is a degree of self-denial, which all ought to pretend to, and be industrious in gaining; for how can virtue to folid, or Christ be truly formed in any

foul, where private inclination is in power, and God's will has not the command?

But however this degree of felf-denial. which brings our own will under a general contempt; is not to be expected, but as the effect of long and repeated endeavours. For as our inclinations become not violent, but by a long indulgence and frequent yielding to them; fo they can never be brought into due fubjection, but by a long practice of denying them. And when we have advanced as far as our present state will admit, yet still our victory is never such, as to be secure of it; for that our inclinations, like a conquered people, will make attempts for recovering their liberty, and will not fail to take all advantages, that shall be given them by the negligence or secure considence of their conquerors.

If this be our condition, then certainly no christians can be in earnest in what they profess, who do not daily labour to make their inclinations subject to what duties the will of God prescribes; and this both in doing what he commands, and avoiding whatever he forbids, though inclination be equally averse to both. Let therefore nature express its uneasiness; and struggle as it will, yet still they are to pursue the way in which duty leads them; and if this discipline be

observed, custom will, by degrees, make the practice easy, and teach flature to obey. This is the way of the Gospel, the way that leads to virtue and to life eternal; and as in this way all those have walked, whom we admire and honour as now happy in the state of bliss, so it is the neglect of this discipline, which opens the way to all the vice we fee in the world; Nature is first favoured in its inclinations; the cultom of yielding to them, gives them ftrength; this strength is increased, till they become violent and ungovernable; and then what is the whole life, but an obedience to their demands? This is the life of the proud and ambitious, of the unjust and covetous, of the idle and intemperate, of the prodigal, fenfual and prophane: Their defires are imperious, and they themselves are nothing better than flaves; they have fet up a tyrannic power, and by this they are not now led, but driven to If the light of grace touches them, if the charity of a friend calls upon them; if diffrace, poverty, or diftempers give them a fense of their milery, they may express, it may be, their refentments, and make some faint promises of disengaging themselves; but the habit of vice foon returns with that force upon them, and the difficulty of liberty appears to great,

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that they again lie down under their chains. Here is the effect of yielding to inclinations which ought to have been kept in fubjection; and if those unhappy souls, who are now fuffering in an unchangeable state of mifery, were asked how they came into that place of torments; they will all with one voice answer, the neglect of denying our felves, has made us thus wretched. O God and is not this a strange blindness of rational creatures, that while we know this, we are yet fo forward in indulging, and fo difficult in denying ourselves, when on this one point our eternal lot fo much depends! Let thy grace, we befeech thee, keep us in better discipline. And fince thou hast taught us, O Jesus, that we must deny ourselves, to follow thee, grant that according to this method, we may become thy true disciples.

we should firmly believe what Christ has taught, this faith is the first ship noverlary for a disciple of Christ. To believe there fore in this manner is not a thirty left as our choice; but we are abletted to the case of the in compliance with a with a with a second to the federal having found by his grace, where this faith has promised, we are bound to receive it has promised, we are bound to receive it with an absolute asset of our subgreen to it, as to the truths proposed to us py God, it, as to the truths proposed to us py God, it,

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HE condition of our nature being such, that we cannot reasonably hope for the least degree of virtue, but what is to be obtained and preserved by the denial of ourselves; it is now to be considered, when and in what particulars we are to deny ourselves, that we may be so far Christ's disciples, as to have just hopes of receiving the reward of his disciples.

Christ, and joins with him in his most ferious endeavours for doing the will of God in all his commandments, both as to what he

enjoins, and what he forbids.

Now it being the will of God, First, That we should firmly believe what Christ has taught, this faith is the first thing necessary for a disciple of Christ. To believe therefore in this manner is not a thing left to our choice; but we are absolutely obliged to it in compliance with the will of God. Hence having found by his grace, where this faith is taught with the security, which himself has promised, we are bound to receive it, with an absolute assent of our judgment to it, as to the truths proposed to us by God,

that is, without hefitation or doubt; and confequently we are under the same obliga-tion of denying ourselves, in all the workings of our fancy, imagination, and reason, which any ways feem to except against, or question the truths so taught and delivered. If they are mysterious and dark to us; if they are incomprehensible, and above our reach; if they seem disagreeable to natural experience and the principles of common reason; if objections occur, that seem to firike at the very foundation; yet faith is to stand sirm, and all these suggestions are to be either despised or resisted, where nature by its curiosity or presumption, invades the rights of God, and chuses rather to rebel, than bear the humiliation, fo uneafy to its pride of believing without feeing. Here is the first felf-denial, of our reason and judg-ment, when they are unwilling to submit to the ordinances of God.

2dly, It being the will of God, that we should keep his commandments, we are obliged to deny ourselves in all those inclinations, which lead us to the violation of his commands; because to break the commandments of God is sin, is disobedience and rebellion; and therefore all the disciples of Christ, are under a necessity of denying themselves, in whatever inclines them to

what is so absolutely unworthy of their profession. If therefore interest, preferment, and honour invite, if sless and blood be strongly solicited, if company and friends importune, if liberty and life plead; if thus, by all the most prevailing arguments, our inclinations be raised and quickened; yet all such inclinations must be denied, if any one condition of the proposals be contrary to the law of God. Because the christian is to love God above all things, and therefore no inclination can be favoured, which is contrary to this love.

3dly, It being the will of God, not only that we should avoid sin, but likewise put on our Lord Jesus Christ, and be led by his spirit; all the followers of Christ are obliged by prudent felf-denials, to keep all those inclinations under government, which are not agreeable to the spirit of Christ and his Gospel. Upon this principle, it becomes their obligation to observe with a strict eye all their natural inclinations; and not only to have an horror of what is evidently finful, but likewise to be jealous of all those ways, which though approved by the world, are not conformable to the example or doctrine of Christ. And here, how many self-denials come in upon them? Sloth and idleness are: not agreeable to the example or doctrine of

Christ; therefore there must be a daily self-denial in such inclinations. Vanity, pride, and ambition, are not agreeable to the ex-ample or doctrine of Christ; therefore there must be a daily self-denial in such inclinations. Courting the world, gratifying the fenfes and appetite, is not agreeable to the example or doctrine of Christ; therefore there must be a daily self-denial in such inclinations. The love of money, unprofitable expences, immoderate folicitude in worldly affairs, are not agreeable to the example or doctrine of Christ; therefore there must be a daily self-denial in such inclinations. All the suggestions of a paffionate or uncharitable difposition; all the contrivances of felf-love; all the methods of a disorderly and undisciplined life; all the entertainments that dislipate the foul, fill it with amusements of what is vain, and bring it by degrees into a forgetfulness of God; all the ways by which unwary fouls are drawn in to love drinking, gaming, and an unprofitable life, are not agreeable to the example or doctrine of Christ; therefore there must be a daily selfdenial in fuch inclinations. The fame lesson must be repeated of all the aversions and diffikes of the foul, in regard of what is good, and prescribed by Christ: An un-willingness to pray, to read, to fast, to

deny ourselves to go to the sacraments: An unwillingness to observe discipline, to employment, to rise when it is time, to go home at due time; a dislike of the ways of humility, of meekness, of peace; a dislike of what is serious and profitable, and especially of their admonitions, whose charity is ever ready to put us in mind of our faults; a dislike of persons, especially of those whose zeal, piety, or any other advantages, we apprehend to be a reproach to us; a dislike of moderation and temperance, with infinite others, which are the unhappy effects of our corruption, are not agreeable to the example or doctrine of Christ; and therefore there must be a self-denial in such inclinations.

Besides these, there are still many other particulars, in which christians are bound to self-denial, by reason of the particular obligations of their state. The more remarkable persons are in their station, the stricter guard they are bound to keep upon themselves, that so they may not give offence to little ones, but edify by their good example. If their guard must be strict, their restraint must be subject to more frequent denials. Upon this principle church-men are particularly obliged to deny themselves in

liberties that others take without reproof, both as to their actions, discourse, behaviour, recreations, habit, employment, and the whole discipline of life; so likewise are all superiors, magistrates, and heads of families: Those too of an inferior degree, as children, servants, Sc. are not exempt; because their subjection tying them up with certain bounds, obliges them to deny themselves in all those inclinations, which are not agreeable to their commands and pleasure, whom

they are bound to obey.

Besides these, there are infinite other felf-denials prescribed by prudence, and are the obligations of all conditions: These take place in all discourse and actions, and the whole management of life; in which it is not enough to consider, what is in itself innocent and lawful; but present circumstances must be weighed of place, persons, and time, whether it be now expedient; and all those inclinations must be denied, which will not stand this test. Those, who have observed the pernicious effects of indiscretion, in the ill-timing of things, and in speaking unseasonably without regard, not only to persons, but even to humours, must fee the necessity of these self-denials, and that the most fundamental duties of christiansaulyaneds turb of the die denity,

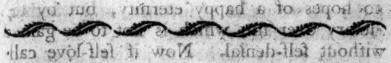
ity, especially of charity and peace, stand

exposed where there is not this care.

From these heads it appears, that felfdenial is so necessary in a christian life, that there is not one faculty in foul or body, which must not be subject to it, from the understanding to the meanest of our fenses. - And hence some, who, through an excels of felf-love, are their own idols, fail not to throw a scandal upon our profession, that if this be the practice of the Cospel, then christianity is a perpetual slavery, it is living under an endless contradiction, and a heavier yoke than nature is able to bear. This character may be allowed from felf-love, which fuffers under christianity, and judges it a tyranny. But as for those, who believe the Gospel, they know there is no reproach in all this: These know, it is as much the duty of a christian to deny himself, as for a foldier to fight against his enemies, that he undertook this, when at the font, he made a folemn protestation to renounce the devil, his works, and his pomps: That he cannot follow Christ, and live by his spirit, except he deny himself; that Christ and his Apostles are his examples in this exercise; that he has no other way for overcoming that corruption, to which he is subject, but by self-denial; that he can have Vol. VII.

no hopes of a happy eternity, but by the victory over fin, which is not to be gained, without felf-denial. Now if felf-love calls this a flavery, where the whole undertaking is for the cause of reason and faith, to put the command into their hands, whose right it is, not to suppress usurpers and rebels: Is not this a more honourable engagement, and-more pleasing, where a good conscience comforts, and the prospect of a crown encourages; than to be in the fervice of unreasonable, infidel or brutish passions, such as flatter indeed every corrupt humour, and please man in what is brutish in him, but engage him in fuch ways as are confiftent neither with honour, reputation, health, estate, reason, faith, or salvation? The point needs not long confideration; for certainly they, who are under the conduct of their passions, are insensibly drawn into many unreasonable, soolish, base, and infamous actions, that they discover their state to be the worst of slaveries, in having their eyes put out, and making present infamy and future misery their choice. May I never, O God, submit to this slavery, but rather live under a perpetual contradiction to nature, than feek to please corruption with violence to reason and faith.

Tale Mangarabile of



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ga Eighteenth Sunday after Pentecost.

In last Sunday's discourse was shewn the necessity of self-denial, and that the practice of it is the means, by which christians are to obtain and advance in that life, which the Gospel requires. But because this practice cannot be expected, but where there is a foundation laid of a solid humility, therefore we must now speak of this virtue, and see how far it may contribute to this good effect.

Justice can never be duly administered, but with regard to desert and demerit. But when these are duly considered, then there is a good direction for reward or punishment; then it appears, how far it is reasonable to discountenance or encourage; to give denials, or grant requests; to straiten the reins, or give greater liberty. If this be a good rule for doing justice to others, it is certainly so in regard of ourselves. We ought, First, To make inquest, and know ourselves, before we can with justice decree rewards or punishments; neither can the practice be reasonable of being indulgent to ourselves, except it be first enquired, what

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is the use we make of favours, and whether

we are the better for them?

If this be the method of justice; then, to be just to ourselves, we must first enquire, what our deserts are: And here upon a very short examination, this evidence is given in and attested above dispute: First, That of ourselves we are nothing, and therefore can of ourselves deserve nothing. 2dly, That by sin we are many degrees worse than nothing, having unworthily provoked our God by our iniquities, and being a miserable clay, have rebelliously listed up our heads against him. 3dly, That we have not only done this, but this is even now our daily practice, there being not one day wherein we offend not against our God.

adly, We must enquire what is the use we make of favours? And here affidavit is made beyond exception, that we generally grow worse for favours, that we abuse all the blessings of God, that the more he heaps upon us, the more unmindful we live of him, and the greater offences we commit against him; so that the increase of benefits

is generally the increase of fin.

Upon this information fully made out, what must be the sentence? If justice sits upon the bench, can it decree rewards to such offenders? Can it give encouragement

to fuch detestable ingratitude? This would be nothing less, than to take part with criminals, to abet their wickedness, and therefore not consistent with justice: The only thing therefore it has to do, is to lay their crimes home to them; so to give them a true sense of their iniquities, and then to doom them to such penalties, as may be some satisfaction to the world of their repentance, a punishment of past crimes, and a discouragement from ever returning to them again. Thus justice must proceed.

Let then every christian set up a court of

Let then every christian set up a court of justice within his own breast, and according to this form, sum up the evidence, and pronounce sentence against himself: Thou art sensible, that thou art nothing, nothing of thyself but misery and weakness; hence thou art certainly in thyself contemptible; therefore I adjudge thee to have a mean opinion of thyself, and always esteem thyself worthy of contempt. 2dly, I adjudge thee never to prefer thyself above others; because being miserable and contemptible, there can be nothing in thee, which thou canst call thy own, upon which thou canst deserves any preference. Hence if thou observest any advantage in thyself, or hast done any thing commendable, I enjoin thee to be ever mindful that this is not thy own, but the pure mercy

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of God in thee; and therefore that thou never value thyfelf on this account, but give praise and thanks to his goodness, whose gift it is, and who is so merciful to thee, who deservest it not.

Again, thy own conscience is evidence against thee, that miserable and wretched as thou art, thou hast yet infinite times been stubborn and rebellious against thy God; thou hast committed many inquities, despised his bleflings, and ungratefully turned them to his own greater displeasure. Wherefore I adjudge thee to receive all troubles and afflictions with patience, as being much less than what thy iniquities deferve. 2dly, Never to speak advantageously of thyself. 3dly, Never to think thyself affronted, upon others speaking contemptibly of thee. 4thly, Never to cover thy imperfections with vain pretexts and excuses, but to be content that thy weaknesses be known. 5thly, To be fatisfied in whatever accident happens, either of overlight or indifcretion, which causes abjection in thee, and is likely to lessen thee with others. 6thly, To rejoice and love to be despiled; because it is reasonable thou shouldst love what is just; and it is just, that what is fo truly despicable should be despised. 7thly, Never so to discover the sense of thy misery, as to expect to raise others commendation,

upon the light of thy humility. Laftly, I enjoin thee to be content with the worst of things; not to murmur, or be in passion, because they are not to thy liking: Not to be uneasy, if thy affairs succeed not to thy wish; Not to seek to satisfy thy curiosity, inclinations or pride: Not to desire the great, the rich, the honourable, or the expensive things of this world; but considering thyself as a most vile and unworthy sinner, ever to judge the worst and meanest things, much better than thou deservest.

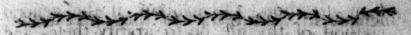
This is the sentence of justice: There needs no more then, but to be truly humble, and felf-denial will follow upon it; fince a man cannot have a true knowledge of himfelf, but the fight of his unworthiness and ingratitude must convince him, that not favour, but humiliation and punishment are his due. And if this must be the result of a general view of himself, what must it be, when he examines every finful inclination in particular? When he calls pride to the bar, and having heard a long catalogue of all her crimes, fees these two points evidently made out against her; that the grows worle for every favour, that is shewn her; and that the end of all the does is his eternal ruin; what can be the sentence, but of perpetual confinement at least, a refusal of all petitions, and to let her

starve, fince the cannot be fed, but with his ruin, who gives her bread? It is the fame of all other corrupt inclinations; let fenfuality. intemperance, prodigality, be called to an account; and what follows close upon them, but endless mischiefs of as many as have been favourable to them; ruin of reputation, of health, estate and soul; with the loss of comfort to such as have a concern in them? Now let these be seriously considered by any man, that has but the least glimple of reason and faith, and let him tell me, what reason there can be for indulging and shewing fayour to these inclinations. He knows they do him the greatest mischiefs; he knows he cannot yield to them in any kind, but it is to strengthen enemies against himself : What therefore must all indulgence to them, be effeemed, but like making much of a difeafe, which is to kill him; like encouraging thieves which are to plunder him; like, feeding wild beafts, which are to tear him in pieces?

Are these then to be favoured, or to be discountenanced and punished? What if he should see a common-wealth, where pick-pockets were encouraged, robbers and murderers were most in favour with the magnificates, had all their petitions granted, their contrivances for doing mischief ap-

proved and confirmed by authority, and their wicked extravagances rewarded: Where enemies and pirates were allowed to make their preys, and daily contributions raifed to furnish them with ammunition and arms: Where mutiny and rebellion were applauded, and the heads of faction put into all places of trult: Where immorality, prophanenels, and irreligion were dignified with titles, and triumphs decreed for the promoters? Who would not be surprised at such confusion and without the help of deliberation cor-clude, that certainly the governors were mad, and deligned nothing, but the total fubversion of their state? If so, let him but keep his fenses, and tell me his judgment of the parallel case. Is not every christian a common-wealth within himself? Are there not in this common-wealth thieves, pirates, mutineers, heads of factions, enemies, rebels, and fetters up for prophanenels and irreligion? What elfe are pride, ambition, covetousness, sensuality, prodigality, intemperance, with infinite other abettors of them, as sloth, idleness, liberty, disorder, vanity, curiofity, love of divertisements, of entertainments, of appetite and ease? What is the business of these, but to make way for all manner of wickedness? What is their end but to rob, murder and destroy? And what

then art thou, O christian, if the general method of thy life be to gratify these, and favour their requelts; if thou givest them the power, and the disposal of thy life be at their command, if thou esteemest it honourable to observe their ways, and then thinkest thyfelf most happy, when thou art most advanced in them? Is not this the exact case of the common wealth now mentioned, only, that thou goest not abroad to see it, but findest it in thyself? What then must the end of this be, but a speedy destruction? And if destruction be the consequence of yielding to these evils; then certainly the discountenancing and suppressing them by felf-denials, must be the way to peace and life; and thus all those will do, who have a true knowledge of themselves, of the extreme weakness and mifery to which they are subject. Grant, O God, I befeech thee, to us thy fervants, this true knowledge of ourselves, that whereas corruption and ingratitude are our principal ingredients, we may think nothing our due, but to be humbled; Grant that we may humble ourselves in the denial of all that is corrupt within us, and never indulge that with favours, which deserves nothing but then much be, so pradite that and direct and a second as the second and a second as the second and a second as the sec



Nineteenth SUNDAY after PENTECOST,

THOUGH I have spoken at large, in the foregoing Sundays, of the necessity of self-denial, and the grounds of it, yet I must add some particulars upon the same

Subject.

First, That, for the practice, all christians would observe in what particular, they stand most in need of denying themselves: For though some are so universally corrupt, that they have not only one fore, but feem to be ulcer all over; transgressing all the com-mandments of God, and therefore lying under a general guilt: Yet with the greatest number, I hope, it is not fo. The case of these, is, that though they are subject to many weaknesses, yet there is some one or two in particular, which are remarkable above the reft, are their greatest obstacles in the work of their falvation, and if once overcome they might then go on with increase of hope, of comfort, and of peace. Now whoever make this discovery in themselves, and a Little care is sufficient to make it; their care then must be, to practise such self-denials, as feem a proper remedy for their aggrievance: For as they eafily find occasions to increase in their evil; but they may eafily find felf-denials to moderate and suppress its This is no more than to prescribe that moderate degree of wifdom, as to confider or enquire what plaister is proper for their wound, and to apply it to the part affected. Where the distemper then is, there let the felf-denial be; let each faculty, part or fenfe, bear the trouble of their own cure, and in this trouble make some satisfaction for the injury they have done. Let the tongue be confined to filence, in whatever subject it ufually offends; let the restraint be put upon the eyes or ears, if they have transgressed; let industry, watchfulness, or labour, be the correction of floth, laziness, or a gossiping humour; it will be in vain to complain of pride, if care be not used for humbling it in the denial of its demands; to lament the violence of an ill habit, will be to no purpose, if proper self-denials be not opposed tob its inclinations. In this manner are feet cific remedies to be applied to every difeafe: Thus impatience, passion, juncharitableness!s detraction, intemperance, sensuality, with a out this method, no help can be reasonably expected either from prayer or facraments, fince there can be no fincerity in these exercifes, but they must be all censured of as

much prefumption and rafhness, as it would be to pray for the fruitfulness of the earth, without making fences, or using means for rooting out the thorns and bushes, which are the occasion of its barrenness.

adly, That every christian would be exact in practifing fuch felf-denials, as are proper for the time; that is, fuch as are necessary for complying with the spirit of God and his church. Sundays and festivals are designed for drawing the foul nearer to God; and difengaging it from the usual distractions of idleness; bufiness, and worldly folicitude. Whatever therefore the inclinations be, which prefs the foul to purfue these on days fagred to better employment, they ought all with resolution to be withstood, and neither fuch books are to be read, nor fuch recreations used, nor such conversation allowed, nor fuch business treated of, as are apt to diffipate the mind with what is finful or worldly, and carry it on in its usual distance from God. Again, the time of Lent, and all other falls of the year, are defigned for humbling finners, for overcoming corrup-tion, and making atonement for past offences. At these times then, it ought to be the talk of every christian to live according to this spirit of the church, and confequently to deny himfelf in all those inclina-

tions, which are contrary or disagreeable to this spirit. What then is to be faid of the usual meetings of the world for drinking, gaming, idle entertainments, or unprofitable divertisements? What of feating and sports? What of profule expences? What of the triumphs of idleness, floth, and pride? What of opprelling our neighbour, or profecuting him with the utmost rigour! What of refusing the payment of just debts, of quarrelling, and contention, and biting one another? What of living an undisciplined life, and observing neither hours nor rule, but leaving all to the chance of company or humour? Are these according to the spirit of the church? No, they are not, but rather the method of fuch as feem to have no knowledge of Christ or his church. All inclinations therefore to these ought to be denied in Lent, and other days of humiliation, that fo christians may answer those purposes, and partake of the mercies designed for them in those holy institutions, saon, say

And what is to be faid of plays on such days of penance? I am forry, there is a necessity of putting this question; for certainly it betrays a great want of christian fense, in those who make the doubt. The question, in the primitive times, was, whether it was lawful at any time to

go to plays; and the fathers and pastors of those primitive times were not only positive in the negative; but likewife declared them to be a part of the pomps of the devil, which christians renounce at their baptism; and therefore purfued all those with the feverest invectives, who not regarding this folemn abjuration, were prefent at thefe meetings. Their reason, was, because such was the lewdness and prophaneness of the plays then composed and acted by the heathens, that christians were obliged to have a horror of them, and confequently, not to make them a part of their entertainment And what if now christians are the composers, does this alter the case, if they let their pen run in the strain of the heathens? If all do not fo, yet it is too true of the greatest part; and therefore they are without excuse, who take their chance, or indifferently go to all And when we have heard. the best apologies that can be made for them, yet none of these can sanctify plays so far as to make them a fuitable entertainment for days of penance: For it is on these days, finners, apprehensive of God's anger, ought nto humble themselves in his fight, and be folicitous in using such means, as God has acknowledged to be powerful with him for the obtaining of mercy; fuch as thefe are

prayer, failing, weeping, mourning, fackcloth and ashes, self-denials, works of charity, and mercy. There is not one penitent mentioned in Scripture, but whom we find seeking God in these exercises. And what then have modern penitents to do with plays? If they are not lewd, yet who can fay they are not idle entertainments? If there be not lewdness on the stage, are there not yet such liberties amongst the spectators, as must give offence both to eyes and ears? Are not the greatest number of the spectators, fuch as are brought thither by idleness and vanity; and how many upon worse designs? Is not the expence of them, both as to time and money, very unprofitable? What then have these to do with days of penance? It must be an indulgence to allow the seeing of some select ones at other times: But to make these the entertainment of so many hours on days of humiliation, is enough to provoke new judgments; and those who have not a sense to understand this, give demonstration that they are not acquainted with the spirit of penance, and that they are more solicitous to please themfelves, than to find mercy.

Is no recreation then to be allowed at such times? Let this be granted; yet still the recreation ought to be suitable to the times.

I will allow a necessity of some relaxation, but I will not allow either vanity, curiofity, or felf-love, to be consulted in the choice of it. There are some of the evils that are to be lamented, and therefore not to be indulged; to be punished, and therefore not to be gratified. When it is a time for feeking mercy, the spirit of penance ought to put the whole man, both inward and out-ward, under a restraint. Table, habit, recreation, are all to be feafoned with it. all to be managed with fuch moderation, as neither to favour corruption, nor be a reproach to the undertaking. Sober conversation, change of exercises, and visits of charity, are recreation enough for fober days; with these persons of piety are contented all the year, and may not others then be contented

with them for a time at least?
But what if they can find no satisfaction in them, but only in fuch things as are here reproved? And what if they can eat nothing with an appente, but what is hurtful to them? They must either correct their appetite, or stand to the ill consequences of it. Such persons as these are under the greater necessity of denying themselves. For where the foul is so wretchedly indisposed, as to delight in nothing but what is dangerous and prejudicial to it, it must either bear the difficulties of a cure, or look

for certain death. And what other cure can there be, than with violence to fland against inclination, and continue this force, till it begins to approve and find a relish in what is for its good? Till it can be diverted without being mad; till it can be pleased without going to the devil for sport; till it can be fatisfied with what is fober, be delighted in vifiting, comforting, or carrying relief to the poor, and making that their support, which nature demands for the price of a play. This would be proper work on all fasts, such as cannot fail of a merciful affiftance for the gaining true health of the foul. Whereas an indulgence in what is unbecoming, difedifying, and hurtful, feeds the distemper, increases the dislipation of a giddy mind, and improves felf-love, till it becomes an ungovernable monster, such as will make that hand its prey, which is fo foolishly kind to it. This is the true state of this case, and I pray God to give all those a fense of it, who are concerned. If selfdenials are the general method of the Gospel, they must certainly be the method of those days, which are defigned for finding mercy. They are almost grown unfashionable, even with the exemplar: Teach us, O God, to be more familiar with what is so much for our good, and forget not those unhappy souls, who stand fo much in need of thy mercy.

tor certain death. And what other cur considered continue this force, till

Truentieth SUNDAY after PENTECOST.

UR nature being fo univerfally corrupt, as it is, and turned from all good, there is scarce any duty belonging to our profession, but it is still attended in the practice with fome felf-denial; whence it comes that those christians, who are bred up by themselves, or others, to too much niceness, and are generally courted in all their humours, have the greatest difficulties in a virtuous life, and fland most exposed to the dangers of their own corruption: Because being little acquainted with what is to be denied, every felf-denial feems a kind of martyrdom, and absolute violence is necessary to submit to it; and how can this violence be expected from them, who know nothing but their own inclinations, and to have all things bend to them? Hence we cannot speak of any dury, but some self-denial is annexed to it; and to require that christians be virtuous, is to enjoin them to be strict in denying themselves. So true it is, that except a man deny himfelf, he cannot be a follower of Christ. Though I have spoken therefore very often of felf-denial, yet it cannot and a land to make in need of the merc

be expected this subject should be laid by,

as long as we have any duty before us.

great work of eternity,

For this day, therefore, I add, that chriftians ought to be doubly careful in denying themselves, in all such inclinations as are not only evil, but likewise are of such an extensive malignity, as to do mischief to others. The reason is, because though we have some fort of knowledge of our own sins, and can make some tolerable conjecture of our own repentance; yet when we come to draw others under guilt, we never can know how far this evil spreads; neither can we tell what repentance or atonement is necessary for making our peace with God, or satisfying for the injury done to our neighbour.

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And now, under this head, I do not fo much direct my discourse to such as give themselves the liberty of running into all kinds of extravagances, and value not what injury they do to others, so they can but gratify their own vicious passions; but I speak to those, who pretending to salvation, are yet not so watchful as they ought to be; and through weakness, oversight, or indiscretion, take some liberties of pleasing themselves, to the prejudice of their neighbour: To these therefore I prescribe such self-denials as are necessary for preventing their

miscarriage in the great work of eternity. which they feem to propose and defire to accomplish total your and the land accomplish

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The first is in the government of their tongue, by checking all inclinations to uncivil and immodest discourse, whether barefaced or difguiled. Because all of this kind is absolutely forbidden as unlawful and finful: To do it upon any ill defign, is downright wickedness; and by way of jest or entertainment, is a finful folly, attended with many mischiefs; such as have no excuse in not being defigned, any more than a man can be excused in burning a house, because he set fire to it in jest; without defigning to burn it. Want of intention may lessen or take off the guilt in many cases, but here this cannot take place, where doing the thing is inseparable from the mischiefs, and involves the intention, if not of malice, at least of folly and rashness. To take shelter therefore in this, is not divinity, but imposture; fuch as all can fee through, who are not willing to be deceived. Wherefore I cannot but admire at those, who seeming ferious in their proposals of heaven, yet take a liberty in this point, as if it were likely to be no bar to their pretentions, whereas the fin is notoriously scandalous, and the guilt of fuch jests will not be easily wiped off, cuals as are necessar

even with their most serious tears. A self-denial therefore here is necessary, such as may be proof against the temptations of with and inclination; and whatever the difficulty be, yet much greater will be the difficulty of repentance, if the sin be not thus prevented; and so those will find it, who, when they hope the whole is discharged, may be surprised with a great debt brought in against them.

A fecond care must be, in forbearing all narratives of what is uncivil, and more efpecially before youth. The thing in itself is ill, because it is conversing with filth, and making an entertainment of what the tongue ought no more to touch than poison; and how often is it, that fuch narratives are taken up in compliance with fenfuality, which lies unsuspected, while it undertakes no more than to relate, and gratifies itself, while it feems to pity others misfortunes? But it is still much worse, while youth are witnesses of fuch relations, fince this ferves to instruct them in what they cannot learn too late, and is fuch a science, as cannot commend them who were their teachers : And yet were the thing examined, I believe it would be found, that by the help of these imprudent and rash discourses, youth generally receive the first light into this darkness: An ill office for all, but more unbecoming fome, who do it, whose duty it is, not to hasten, but to keep danger at a greater distance.

A third care must be, in avoiding in narratives all oaths, curles, and other prophane or irreligious expressions; because all these are disedifying to pious ears, and of ill example to others who are too forward in taking fuch leffons, though not defigned for them; and if it be to fatisfy an irreligious humour, which is not yet fo impudent as to shew itself, but only in this modest way, or to make sport for others, who delight in such impiety, this still pleads with stronger arguments the necessity of self-denial. And what if fuch expressions are no additions, but real matters of fact; does this justify the relation? These would not take this for a reason, should their cook send fowl up to their table with feathers and guts. The cooks found them fo; but they expect nothing should be brought to them, but what is fit for their board. And why then should they not be as cleanly as their cooks, and bring nothing in public, but what is fit to appear? If their fouls were as christian, as their palate is nice, they would no more bear the one than the other; they would leave filth to the scavenger, and not make the dunghill their entertainment. All this then is unworthy

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of christian ears, and self-denial ought to be employed in preparing all narratives before

they are brought upon the board.

Infinite other particulars there are, in which felf-love must be denied, for preventing whatever injury may be otherwise done to our neighbour's soul. Those who have not this command of themselves, but will rather venture this mischief, than spare their jests, or deny this inclination, divert themselves at too-dear a rate, and shew how little they value their own souls, by setting so low a price upon their neighbours. If these esteem themselves christians, it is not by their following Christ; his charity in shedding his blood for the salvation of man, is demonstration, that they have none, who sport and please themselves, if not in his ruin, at least in helping to make him miserable.

Self-denial must have a farther part in the moderation of such commands as are prejudicial to our neighbour in his life or health. It is too frequent amongst those, who have others in their power, to lay commands on their servants, and oblige them to attendance, without any consideration of the difficulty, hazard, hardship, or injury it may be to them. This sometimes is the effect of a careless or a haughty humour, and too often of immoderate self-love, which has scarce

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eyes or feeling for any belides itlelf; it labours under the earnelines of its own defires, and is tyrant enough to facrifice others to its own pleasure; it values not what others suffer, so it has but its own withes. Now whatever the root be, whether of neglect, pride, or self-love, there is still something perverse, which ought to be denied; for till a Christian comes to have such consideration of his neighbour, as to moderate his own inclinations, when it is necessary for his neighbour's good, he can have no right to the name he bears.

And if this be necessary in regard of the meanest servant, it is much more so in respect of those who are the pastors of our souls: How then will they answer it, who to satisfy their own disorderly humour in going to bed late, or their sloth in sleeping in the morning, oblige those to keep such ill hours, that by immoderate fasting, their health is considerably prejudiced, and their service by many years shortened, which otherwise they might have done their neighbour? Is it not plain in this they are treated with cruelty, instead of charity; and that their lives, which ought to be spent in their neighbour's good, is by this made a facrifice to sloth? I own, there may be occasions, in which, going late to prayers cannot some—Vol. VII.

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times be avoided, and therefore not to be reproved; but certainly to make a practice of it, in compliance with a diforderly and lazy life, is both shameful and cruel: And how far their prayers will afcend towards heaven. who come thus prepared to them, I cannot define, but I know what I fear. Here then felf-denial ought to take place for breaking fuch ill customs, which have so much of felf-love in them, and fo little respect either to God and man, that fo all may be done to edification. Thus wherever we turn, we find occasions of felf-denial; help all those, O God, who are here concerned, and give them grace to stand against all the violence of evil custom and a perverse nature. To yield to these, pleases for a time; but to overcome them in compliance with duty and the will of God, is the thing we have all undertaken, the exercise of a true disciple, and the way to a crown. 44.4.416 sign because of

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Teacher Surday

Twenty-first Sunday after Pentecost.

who could thus menated to them, I canno HERE being still other virtues belonging to a Christian life, besides those we have hitherto mentioned, there must be likewife other felf-denials requifite for the practice of them, And in particular, fince the principles of the Gospel oblige its professors to such a meekness of spirit, as to render them easy, gentle, and affable to all. there is a necessity of denying themselves in whatever it be, which takes them off from the practice of this Christian meekness: I know, it must be owned in some, their temper is so unhappy in this point, that moroseness, roughness, and ill-nature, seem to be moulded up with their bones and flesh, and their foul feems to be turned quite four: But, however, as the crookedness of nature is subject to industry and grace in other cases, so it is in this; so that though it may be difficult, and thus becomes a talk, yet it is a task that may be overcome. It is visible in the most furious beasts, what industry will do; for these, by degrees, are tamed, and brought to the hand; those Christians

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must therefore lie under the confusion, either of being more untractable than beafts, or of intolerable floth, in not taking pains to foften nature into a better temper. Such pains they have reason to take; First, Because it is a constitution quite contrary to the temper of the Golpel-spirit, which has meekness and affability for one necessary ingredient; and Christ commands all his fol-lowers to learn it, Discite à me: Learn of me, because I am meek and humble. 2dly, Because it is a great indisposition for performing the most necessary duties of a Christian life; such as charity, compassion, and mercy: There being nothing that makes a man more insensible of others missortunes, and confequently lefs inclined to pity, and thoughts of relief, than a rough and morofe the Christian profession in all, it has a particular deformity, even to a fcandal in those whose effential duty it is to give assistance to their neighbour; fuch are pastors, and all ecclefiaftics. 3dly, Because it deprives them of the best part of charity, and leaves them almost incorrigible under all their weakness; since few are to be found so hardy, as to venture with advice upon them, who by their fierceness and ill-nature difcourage fuch charity, and threaten a fform to those who attempt it. 4thly, Because of

the perpetual danger they are in, of losing their peace by contention and quarrels; it being very natural for fuch persons to give affronts, and very difficult to put up any. Lastly, Because of the great dislike all perfons have to this humour; whence those, who are subject to it, can very seldom be welcome any where, as being fit neither for friendship nor common conversation. There is too much of felf-conceit visible in them for any to admire, or even to bear, except it be by force; and hence they are feldom long in a crowd, because it is their general good fate to clear the room where they go. From these reasons may these sturdy Christians find motives for denying their ungrateful humour, and taking pains to make it more gentle: And if they do it not, I think they ought to suspect themselves both unfit for this world and the next.

Besides this natural want of meekness, there is another taken up, and is affected or artificial. This is the misfortune of some, who think there is something great in being ill-natured; who cannot speak to any one inferior to them, but it is with such an air of contempt, as if their breath were too precious to be spent upon such poor animals. Hence they are always difficult of access, carry it high, and are seldom free in their Miji

words, except it be of fuch as are abufive, to express their passion or their scorns All this is evidently the effect of a great weaknels of judgment, and of pride. It is a weakness in not understanding what true greatness is, and fetting a value upon what is really base and contemptible. For what is more contemptible than what God defpifes; than what the devil and the world laugh at, while they promote it? God hates pride; the devil triumphs in it; and the world, though it be wicked enough to encourage it, yet cannot fee it but with contempt. And what an expedient then is this for Christians to make use of for distinguishing themfelves, and gaining the efteem of the great, when it is one of the things which most lessens them both to God and the world? Must it not therefore be concluded, that fuch as depart from the meeknels of the Gospel, and affect such a destructive way, as has turned angels into devils, and made men to be the companions of their milery, have reason to deny themselves in such pernicious inclinations, and rather by violence come to the practice of christian humility, than be so madly fond of appearing above others, as to be pleafed even with a precipice from which they must fall deeper?

There is still another want of meekness, not so much the effect of pride, as of hu-

mour and felf-conceit: In those, I mean, who having their particular diflikes, cannot be fo much as civil to those in whom they observe the marks of their aversion. These have made their observation, and it is now to them a rule, wherever they fee fuch particular motions, such affected looks, behaviour, or freech, there can be nothing good, nothing that can deferve a civil correspondence, compassion, or relief; and how then are fuch persons treated, but with morosenels, ill-nature, and, upon the leaft occafion, with expressions of dislike? But this is not a rule warranted by the Gospel; for though fin is to be hated, and there is authority for not contracting friendship, or converting with notorious finners; yet I do not there find a warning for judging of our neighbours upon fuch prefumptive obfervations, nor of admitting aversions upon their difagreeable mien, nor of confining charity by humour or dislike. Christian civility, compassion, and charity, are by Christ's appointment of a larger extent, and therefore not to be restrained by his followers, but to be practised as he has ordained it: And those who do otherwise, have not yet learnt Christ, but only the Pharifee; for it is nothing better than pharifaical in Chriftians to be civil and compassionate to those their customers or hoofs M iv

only whom they like, and to let thole feel the effects of their aversion who are not fashioned to their mould. To these seanty Christians I must therefore advise a double self-denial; one of their judgment, by fufpecting the rule as uncertain which they follow, and to leave the judging of hearts to Him whole prerogative it is to be the fearther of them: For that however they have found their observations true in some, yet they may easily be deceived in others; fince there is no fuch certain connection between the heart and the looks, but the wilest are often mistaken. There are grave fools, as well as light ones; and how often is vice under a referve, and the wolf covered with the meekness of the lamb? He that has faid to us, Cavete, Take heed, has told us the danger of being mistaken.

A fecond felf-denial, I advise, of their inclination and behaviour, so as to treat those with meekness and respect, whom they apprehend as little deserving it; and even then to offer all necessary help, when nature seems provoked, and ready to spurn. Because true charity considers only the necessity of persons, without examining deserts; it asks no questions, whether they be Samaritans or Jews; neither does it bid them stand up, to shew whether there be any hing agreeable in their carriage or looks.

It is much more generous than fo, and cannot bear the imposition of such selfish conditions: True charity is as extended as human nature, and consults not inclination when its help is demanded. Those who follow not this rule, but there only bear all with meeknels, where there is dependence; there only are moderate, where there is fear or interest; there only are patient, where there is a favourite; there only are forward in their affiltance, where there is inclination; and with others are generally morose, pee-vish, impatient, and without compassion; those, I say, who make this distinction, and are thus uneven in their ways, it is to be feared; have no more charity than the Heathens; fince if they were Heathens they would do just so, that is, follow nature without any regard to the direction of faith and the Gospel. And have not then Chrishans of this character reason to deny themselves? He who has declared to his followers, that except your justice exceeds that of the Scribes and Pharisees, you shall not enter into the kingdom of beaven, Matt. v. 20, has shewed them how ill prepared they are for heaven, and the necessity they have of bringing their hearts to a better disposition.

It can be esteemed no better than a natural religion, where meekness, moderation,

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patience, compassion, are subject to nature only, and then only are practiled, when na-ture is either moved to it by inclination, or awed to it by interest or fear: For what is there in this, but what nature fuggefts; and is the fame in unbelievers, and even in beasts, as in Christians? As long then as Christians are directed by these principles of nature only, they act not as Christians; and confequently, whatever patience, compassion, or tenderness they shew in this way, it is all lost as to eternity; fince nothing can be accepted for that end, but what is the effect of grace, and undertaken in compliance with the will of God. This fanclifies actions, and renders them fruitful; but without this they are left in their natural barrenness, and can have no effect beyond this world. I wish all those would think of this, who are directed fo much by the fancy and the eye, in all they do. And, O God, have we not all reason to be mindful of it, since we must confess nature, inclination, and human re-spects, have too general a part in the best of our lives? Teach us, we beseech thee, a better method; and fince by thy grace we are adopted thy children, let the same grace have the direction of our lives; that so, while by profession we are Christians, we may not be found at last to have lived as Heathens.

Twenty fecond SUNDAY after PENTECOST.

Talmer days between

F meekness and compassion are necessary ornaments of a Christian, they are most particularly so, when he treats with the poor and miserable; for then their beauty is doubled both to God and man, while he brings comfort and courage to the afflicted, and moves God to return him the tendernels he has shewed to others. But to express compassion in words is not enough, except he gives proof of his fincerity by affording relief. This God exacts from all, according to their abilities; for fince he is the supreme Lord of all that man polleffes, God is the proprietor, and man is no more than steward; and in virtue of this tenure is he obliged to answer whatever bills God draws upon him. The next is to supply his own necessities, and those of his family; for with this God has politively charged him. The next is to supply the necessities of the poor; these have express orders from God to alk relief, and he has express orders to give it; there bills there-fore cannot be protested, but by disowning his right, and a forfeiture of the trull repofed in them. To be severe therefore, and hard to the poor, is not an offence only against charity, but against justice too; for since God has declared that what is given to the poor is given to him; the poor in their just necessities cannot be denied, but God at the same time, in them, is denied his own. I hus charity and justice are linked together, and what is asked by the poor as a charity, is demanded by God upon the title of justice are linked.

But what God thus demands, he has mercifully made it man's interest to give, in declaring alms to be most powerful with him for turning away his anger, for obtaining pardon of fin, the affiftance of divine light and grace, and mercy at the day of judgment; fo that whereas our necessities are here infinite, and the dangers before us above all that can be comprehended, we have here the affiftance of an expedient. fuch as will be the remedy of all our wants, and our fecurity against all, whatever we have reason to fear. And here now let those consider their management, who being distinguished from infinite numbers in the abundance they have received, and in this having opportunity of laying up a treasure in heaven, prodigally walte what they have, in gratifying their own corruption, and neglect all those great advantages they might otherwise make in the better use of their money. But having so often spoken to these on other occasions, I forbear repetitions, and turn to the other extreme; those Christians, I mean, who do not waste, but either unprofitably lay up their talents in a napkin, or seek no other improvement but what is useless to them.

These are they who in scripture are called covetous; and what their fin is, the apostle fufficiently declares, who feldom mentions coverousness but he terms it idolatry, which is the worst of crimes, no less than a renouncing of God; and fays, it is one of the fins for which the wrath of God comes on the children of disobedience, Col. iii. 5, 6. It is idolatry, because covetous persons make money their God, and give all that to it which is due only to him. They love money above all things, they place their greatest confidence in it; they serve it, and are even flaves to it; they feek it before all things, that is, with a folicitude due only to heaven; they make it their happines; and for the take of it, despise the will and commands of God, neglect their fouls, and flight all the promifes of future happiness which God has made to them: And what is this less than fetting up their money in the place of God? What less than worshiping and adoring it?

As to our present subject, it is plain that the covetous oppose the orders of Providence, in keeping their money locked up from the poor, and rather than part with it, chuse to forego all those considerable advantages God offers them upon a better use of their riches. They hear how valuable mercy is, how defirable a good it is to obtain pardon of fin, and to be delivered from the consequence of their past iniquities; but in their hearts the love of what they at present have in possession so much outweight the goods of faith, which are yet to come, that they cannot be perfuaded to lay down money for the purchase. The price of heaven feems with them to be kept up too high, if money is to be laid down for it. And hence all the encouragement God gives, and the promises he makes to such as are merciful in relieving the poor, make no impression on them; they are contented to venture all that is to come, fo they may keep their beloved idol.

Whence it is evident their faith is not great, and their confidence in God is less, who resting with comfort in their money, dare not trust in God; may, when they hear what solemn engagements he has made to

fuch as are charitable, yet have not the heart to venture upon fuch promifes, neither can they depend upon him. Then how very inconsiderable is the care of their fouls, who making all kind of provision for this life, and being afraid of wanting, have not the least proportion of solicitude for their better part, but put all this to the hazard, fo the other may be fecure? Were heaven their concern, they would be afraid of lofing it, more than of starving; and do as much for obtaining it, as in providing for this world. But now, whilft they have it in their power to engage heaven to them by the good use of what they possess, and yet pass by all these favourable opportunities rather than let go any part of their money, it is but too plain that the love of their money is many degrees above the love of God, and that their folicitude is not to fave their fouls, but their money.

Then again, if it be considered into how many particular sins these persons are drawn by their covetous temper, it will be too apparent, that if they can make any defence against the charge of idolatry, yet their daily provocations will still arm the wrath of God against them. I do not, however, pretend to make them sensible of them, because where the heart is possessed with this passion,

it is indisposed for discerning its own unhappiness; but rather finds, ways, to jullify such things as have injustice and oppression written in the front of them. Others may eafily fee, it, and be surprifed to see what ways these generally take to increase their stock; what frauds, what oppression, what injustice; what feverity, perfecution, and cruelty; how watchful they are to take all undue advantages of their neighbours' overfights, weakness, and misfortunes; how they pursue all with the utmost rigour; have not eyes to spare the miserable, nor any bowels of compassion towards the distressed. Whence without reflecting upon the inward man, which lies under all the deformity of unjust contrivances and unreasonable desires, it may be feen that the general method of their lives is contrary to the truth, compasfion, justice, and charity of the Gospel. And now if we add to these their domestic fins, in their cruelty to those of their family, in robbing them of what is for the comfort and convenience of life, in exposing children to great difficulties, and through a perpetual uneafiness to many temptations; in filling their house with repining and clamours, with a thousand other evils unknown to all but those that feel them; it cannot be quelsioned but their manifold guilt makes their fouls an abomination to God, and there can be he wonder in the many wees in holy writ pronounced against them. Where are they who heap up filver and gold, in which men put their trust? They are cast out, and gone down to hell, Baruch iii. 18. Woe to you rich, for you have received your comfort, Luke vi. 14. It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God, Matt. xix. 24. They who will be rich, fall into temptation, and into the snare of the devil, and into many unprofitable and hurtful lusts, which draw men into destruction and perdition. For the love of money is the root of all evil, Tim. vi. 9. Go to now you rich men, weep and bowl for your miseries that Shall come upon you. Your riches are corrupted, and your garments eaten with moths; your gold and filver is cankered, and the rust of them shall be a witness against you, and shall eat your flesh as it were fire: You have beaped to yourselves wrath in the last day, James v. 1.

If thus God's word speaks of all who love riches, such as love them with the excess of covetousness cannot expect the rigour of such expressions should be abated to them; but have reason, by a timely care, to prevent their being made the instances of these frighful truths. This cannot be pre-

vented, but by an entire change of their hearts; for if they consider the effects of God's infinite love to man, and the great duties that are exacted from him, and then restect that they are wanting in all; that they neither love God, nor seek him, nor serve him, nor put their trust in him, nor have any concern in satisfying any of those duties of charity which they owe their neighbour; that they regard not the example of Christ, nor give ear to his doctrine; that they run expressly contrary to the current of the Gospel; what can they think, but that if their hearts be not changed, they can expect no salvation through Christ.

And let not those be too forward in flattering themselves, who find their hearts free from that excess of covetousness which has been here described; for if the scripture be regarded, there is no need of more, than to love money, to be in danger of eternal ruin. If the heart then be too sensibly affected with this love, there is reason enough to fear, even though there appears nothing but innocence in view; because this love is a passion which sets all the faculties of the soul upon the biass, and so strongly bribes the understanding, that this has no power to see a thousand fins which favour this passion, and it is only some monstrous extravagance

that will make it flart. These, therefore, have reason to make a double examen of all they do, especially where money or interest is the concern; for otherwise they may very eafily be deceived, and live on under a manifold guilt, and yet with the confidence of being innocent. Besides our experience in this point, we have the word of God in many inflances to give proof of this blinding and finful passion; let those, therefore, who feem least to believe it in themselves, fee they be not most deceived by it. But it is thou, O God, must deliver us from this powerful evil. Give us, therefore, grace to make a good use of thy bleffings, that we may neither turn them against thee, nor rest in them; but by thy direction make them serviceable for our coming to the posfession of thee. Defend our hearts against the love of tiches, against coverousness, and a worldly spirit. How many thousands have here perished! May we be no addition to this unhappy number.

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Twenty-third SUNDAY after PENTECOST.

Our perverse inclinations teach us, that a general felf-denial is necessary for a Christian life. We have already shewed this in several particulars; the addition of one more shall be the conclusion of this subject. This carries the name of curiosity; it has no place amongst the infamous crimes, and yet, if not duly governed, opens the way to many sins. It has many branches

belonging to it.

The first is a curiosity of knowing what is above our knowledge, or such things, as God is pleased to hide from us. By giving way to this inclination, there is evident danger of entrenching upon faith, which being a belief of God, with a simplicity of heart entirely considing in his truth, there can be no place, but for submission; and if curiosity creeps in, it must be interpreted as the effect of doubting and incredulity. Where this is, faith is not sound, and if it be voluntarily admitted, the displeasure of God may be justly feared; as in Zachariah, who, after the revelation of a divine truth, demanding farther consirmation of what he could not

comprehend, did in this question the truth of God, and discovered his unbelief. The mysteries therefore of faith, though incomprehensible, are to be received, but not questioned; to inform ourselves what they are, is the duty of faith; but to give to curiofity the liberty of fearthing into them, is prefumption. The glory of the noon day fun is took strong for our weak fight, and they, who attempt it, find darkness the effect of their rashness; what then must it be, for our weak reason to search into the mysteries of God? Solomon has told us; Qui feru-Prov. xxv. 27. He that searches into man jesty, shall be confounded by its glory, Blindness is the just punishment of this prefumption: And the evidence of this punishment we find in our unhappy age, in which the liberty of fearthing has almost extinguilhed faith; and those are making haste to Atheism, who undertake to make new difcoveries of God. It is true here what the apostle fays; If any man thinks that he knows any thing, he knows nothing yet, as be ought to

There is a like danger in the attempt of knowing other things, which God has hid from us; as in fearthing into things to come, and in all endeavours to discover the

future events of life or fortune. For this is a disobedience to God, in transgressing the bounds he has fet us; it is a lessening our dependence upon him; and the means that are used being what he has forbid, it is going to the devil for light. Upon which fub. ject, hear the express command of God: See there be none found among st you, that asks questions of southfayers, and observes dreams and divinations; neither let there be a forcerer nor inchanter, nor that confults with familiar spirits or diviners, and seeks the truth of the dead, for all these things our Lord abbors, Deut. xviii. 10. Of all which St Augustin fays, that they are arts either of a triffing or hurtful fuperstition; they spring from a certain detestable correspondence of men and devils; they are the compacts of a faithless and deceitful friendship, and are to be altogether avoided and detefted by the Christian, De Doct. Chr. c. xxiii. Upon this account all the fins of this kind are always fet down as transgressions of the first commandment, and by this are declared contrary to the faith and love which are due to God. This curiofity must therefore be set down no less than the crime of forsaking God.

The second is a curiosity of the senses; and as far as this inclines to immodesty or sensuality, it is too well known, how fatal it

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is to that purity and cleanness of heart which the Gospel requires; there being no abomination under this head, but what owes its birth and improvement to this liberty of the senses; and infinite numbers having been led into the depth of vice, who have defigned no farther than to fatisfy the itch of an unfuspected curiosity. The guard therefore cannot be kept too strict, where a little neglect is enough to let in the worst of enemies. I need not come to particulars upon this subject; our own corrupt inclinations teach us fully enough what we ought to avoid; that we ought to check all that curiofity which leads to the knowledge of what has no other advantage in it, but only to gratify our own corruption, to pleafure our enemy, and to lay us more open to his fnares; that we ought to flop our ears against all discourse of this nature, and turn our eyes from all such objects, which help only to convey poison to the soul; here books, and pictures, and songs, and plays, must come under this caution; for it is amongst these curiosity feeds, and makes improvement; and the devil, if consulted, could not recommend a better school; and if to these be added the liberty, or even flight of gazing, then he has no more to do, than fit still and entertain himself with these who

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take his work out of his hands, and will be their own devil to themselves. So far this curiosity leads; and those who will not be watchful against the first attempts of it,

may eafily come to advance thus far.

A third curiofity, is to enquire into the concerns of our neighbour, such as concern us not, and, it may be, it is not fit we should This curiofity takes sometimes ungenteel ways, by fifting or examining fer-vants and children, and laying our ears to every whifper and discourse, even when it is fo particularly addressed, as to be designed a fecret: Sometimes finful ways, as in opening letters, or by other undue means breaking in, either by force or subtilty, into others secrets. But whatever way it takes, this curiosity is always odious to men, displeasing to God, and very injurious to such as practice it. First, By filling their heads with many impertinences, fuch as fail not to disturb them in their best duties, and hinder all kind of recollection. The most referved are subject to too many distractions; what then must their fault be, whose diffipation is the fruit of their own contrivance? 2dly, By being the occasion of neglecting their own business; there being none more apt to be careless at home, than those who are too busy abroad: They who are earneftly looking at a distance, easily overlook what is nearer to them. 3dly, By putting them in danger of many rash judgments; whilf their imperfect information of things puts them upon making many reflections and constructions such as have no other grounds but their own undue inferences, suppositions, or mistakes. 4thly, By being the occasion of defaming their neighbour; fince, as pitchers ever filling are ever running over, fo thefe, being full of their novelties or discoveries, cannot contain, but, by way of fecret, publife all they know. And how often, by these spies, are the most scandalous truths revealed; how often, by their prefumptions, are the most innocent blackened with infamy? Lastly, By laying the grounds of great diffentions between friends, neighbours, and those of the strictest tie; there being no more general feed of division than the treacherous discoveries, lame relations, and prefumptive constructions of these busy, inquisitive and reftless Christians.

A fourth curiofity is with earnestness to apply the mind to such things as are not agreeable to our state, but are a hinderance or distraction to it; as for church men and religious to be fond of reading poets, plays, and profane authors, or with too much eagerness to be bent to music. For gentlemen to

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be taken off from all care of their effates, by immoderate divertisements, the love of the town, or the court. For traders, by indifcreet projects, by love of company, news, or public offices, to be diverted from the bufinefs, which is the support of their family. And fo of all other conditions respectively. For though recreation must be allowed in all states; yet since every one, in whatever condition he be, has obligations belonging to his state, it must be every one's business to fatisfy these obligations, and there cannot be a general, or any confiderable neglect of them, but it must be an offence to God, and injury to conscience; because it is God and conscience exact those obligations from them. Hence to permit the mind to be so affected with any thing else, or to be drawn from the due folicitude of performing them, is a hurtful curiofity, and cannot be excused from the sin of being unjust and faithless to their trust and charge.

Upon this subject St Jerome having expressed his complaints at large to pope Damasus, of priests being better acquainted with poets than the prophets; and having reproached the sacred virgins with the like disorder, he afterwards relates his own missortune; and having retired from his friends into a solitude, there to lament his sins, he

often longed for Cicero and Plautus, to give fome refreshment to his tired spirits; and after reading them, he could not again take up the prophets, but with a dislike of their unpolished stile. Upon which, being one day in an extafy, presented before the judgment-feat, and asked what he was? He answered, I am a Christian. But the judge replied, thou liest; thou art a Ciceronean, and not a Christian; for where thy treasure is, there is thy heart also; and then commanded him to be scourged. And this holy father fays, that returning to himself, his wounded shoulders, and the pain he selt, was demonstration, that this was not the illution of a dream, Ep. 22. ad Euftoch. Thus this father. And may not hence all fee, that this curiofity, which alienates the heart from the particular obligations of each respective state, is not only sinful, but may go so far as to make void even the character of baptism, and unmake the Christian? If his fondness of Cicero made him a Ciceronean, how much worse are others, who make that their business, which is worse than teading Cicero, a book, which could be no more than a diffipation of the mind, but otherwife wholly innocent, and without rechange and having proof a mort beille

From these heads it may be eafily appre-

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hended, how mischievous euriosity is in all its branches, and that it cannot be indulged in any kind, without their prejudice, who favour it. Let but this one point be considered: that it is the business of carlofity to involve a man in all that which the bell have ever made it their business to decline; that while these study to withdraw themselves from whatever diffipates the mind, and leffens their folicitude for eternal goods; curiofity engages more and more in them, and affects those things most, which are unavoidable distractions. Let this be well considered, and it will oblige us to pray, that God will please to lessen in us this distracting evil; that being unhappily subject to a roving mind, and to infinite impertinences, which divert it from its greatest concern, we may not fo far add to our misfortunes, as to indulge that inclination, which is fo restless, as to be ever inviting us to new distractions and these error votis it sob bluow the judgment limite of the world after

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Twenty-fourth SUNDAY after PENTECOST.

BEING now come to a conclusion of these instructions, and in composing them, having had daily occasions of considering both the Gospel and the world, I will now take my farewel of the reader, by leaving him my thoughts of the world, I mean of the Christian world; and they are these:

First, That if the world be considered in its general practice, I cannot find that it has any fairh or knowledge of the Gospel; its common and most approved method being contrary to what the Gospel teaches; and Christians living in the same manner as they would do, if they were heathens. This is the judgment I make of the world, after I have examined and confidered it now for some years: And for the proof of it, I must bring the world to the Gospel, and compare it. First then, The Gospel requires of its followers to be humble, and condemns in them all kind of pride and ambition. what does the world? It fets up for pride, promotes it in all its ways: In this is the N iii

contrivance of thoughts, the expence of money and of time. Let the Christian world be viewed in all its feveral degrees, and taking the generality, what is there but oftentation and vanity? And what more could it do in this, were it heathen? 2dly, As to justice, it is what the Gospel requires; fo that all its professors ought to do to others. as they would be done by; ought to avoid all frauds and over-reaching, and give to every one their own. And what does the world? The general practice is to use frauds, to over-reach and deceive; fo that whoever treats of any business, must stand upon his guard, and be as well provided, as if his business were with pick-pockets or thieves. 3dly, The Gospel requires charity, that is, a general love for all: And what is the method of the Christian world? Much the same as of the heathen: Men salute those who salute them; are friendly to their friends, and where dependence or interest obliges them to it; and to others observe a form of civility, But bating these circumstances, which are common to the heathen, is not detraction the common subject of difcourfe; are not injuries purfued, animofities and contentions kept up; are not trifles made the occasion of debates, the innocent oppressed, the cause of the poor neglected;

are not all pulling and tearing at one another, as if they were beafts of prey? And what is this better than the heathen? 4thly, The Gospel requires self-denials, for subduing our natural corruption: And what is the general practice of Christians? Are not they as indultrious as the heathen, in feeking all that pleases, in gratifying their senses, their appetite, and passions? Is not intemperance and fenfuality become fo fashionable as to have worn off all reproach? Where are any meetings, without debauchery and excess? That which should be their confusion, is become their entertainment and mirth. How very few families are fober and regular? Where is the youth that is not bred up in corruption; where the effates that are not wasted in folly or vice thus, instead of making war against corruption, all is as generally turned into this channel, as if this were their profession. Laftly, The Gospel requires its followers to feek first the kingdom of God, and rather to forfake all the goods of this life, than hazard those of the next. And what is the practice? It is too generally the same amongst Christians, as heathens; the affections are fet upon the things of this life; these they feek, these they labour for; and not only to make provision for necessaries, but for N iv

the purchase of what they ought to despise, for the support of those passions which have no better objects than smoke or filth. And when the duties of the next life come to interfere with the conveniencies of this, how easily is conscience smothered, and reasons found to dispense with all that which threatens present loss in the performance? Thus greedily to heap up money, or prodigally to spend it, is the common business of Christians; and so far are they from seeking first the kingdom of God, that the greatest number are scarce ever serious in thinking of it.

adly, If the world be confidered in that part of it which seems serious in the profesfion of religion, and being esteemed pious, lives in hopes of future happiness, I must own my fears, that I cannot but be very apprehensive of great numbers of them as to their eternal lot. First, Because though they are not like the rest of the world, engaged in what is notoriously vicious, yet they feem unmindful of the promifes made in baptism; they renounce not, as was there folemnly engaged, the pomps of the devil; they live in the profession of what is vain and idle; they are prodigal in their expences, too fond of the world, and of all that is admired in it; too forward in gratifying themselves; they have too great a value for

the modes, customs, authority, and example of worldly men; are more fearful of their reproach, than zealous in following the doctrine of the Gospel and example of Christ. Hence how rare a thing is it to find, even amongst thefe, the humility, moderation, zeal, or charity of the Gospel! How rare are they who despise the world, who are truly poor in spirit, who deny themselves, and take up their crofs to follow Christ? How rare they who love God above all things, who feek first the kingdom of God, and give proof of this in their folicitude in the distribution of their time and money? 2dly, Because though they follow the practice of religion, both as to its private and public exercises; yet methinks I fee much more of custom and form, than true piety in their prayers; fo much of worldly vanity and irreverence in their public affemblies; I see confessions without amendment, and therefore, I fear, without repentance; I fee holidays fo much neglected, fast-days and Lent so much abufed penance fo much laid by, that I cannot but fear, of these Christians, great numbers have not a true fense of their duty, and are but little pleasing to God.

From this division of Christians and their character, it is plain what my sense is; that such as are truly in earnest in the business of

falvation, must absolutely quit the former rank, notwithstanding their number and authority; because these having forsaken the ways of Christ, all that desire to come to Christ must forsake them. 2ds, They must not be deluded by the authority of the second rank, nor take all that for sanctified which they do, although they may appear saints in comparison of the others; because it is undeniable that these take greater liberties than the Gospel approves; they comply too much with the world; they do not heartily espouse the cause of Christ, in being zealous followers of his doctrine and example.

What then is to be done? I prescribe nothing; but I think all that undertake to follow Christ, and hope for falvation through him, ought to inform themselves what it is Christ requires of them; they ought, with the folicitude due to their eternal concern, to enquire what rules Christ and his apostles have left for the government of the inward and outward man, as they fland recorded in the New Testament. For fince he came to teach Christians the way to life, they cannot expect life for their eternal portion, if they walk not in the way which he has taught. And in learning his rules, they are not to take the world for their expositor; because he having declared that the world is

his enemy, and hates him, it cannot be expected but the world will ever be partial. and put such constructions on his words as are favourable to its own ways, though difapproved and absolutely condemned by him. Let the world then plead never fo ftrongly; let it plead custom, authority, example, and prescription; let it argue from difficulties and inconveniences, from fingularity, reproach, and the complication of all temporal disadvanges and losses; yet still it is not to be regarded; the Christian is to hold fast to Christ, follow him, and forfake the world. For it is not only in faith, but in morals too, that if an angel from heaven should come and teach otherwise than Christ and his apostles have taught, yet in such case the Christian is not to adhere to him: What authority then can the world, and worldly men have, in their perverting and adulterating the morality of the Gospel; when the Christian is preinformed by Christ himself, that the world is not from heaven. but an enemy to it?

If then the world encourages pride, and favours it in all its demands; if it rewards ambition with applaule, and by custom, endeavours to take off the scandal of its guilt; yet the Christian is to follow the Cospel till, value and practise the humility it

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teaches, and renounce all that pride which the world recommends. If the world honours riches, rates them as the happiness of man, and fets all those as objects of envy who have them ready at the command and fervice of their defires; the Christian is to follow his Master still, repute riches as dangerous to the possessor, difficult in their use, and finful in their love; that there may be the greatest unhappiness in the midst of wealth, and that poverty of spirit is the more substantial blessing. In this manner must the Christian proceed in all other particulars; fet a value upon every thing, even as he finds it valued by Christ; admire what Christ admires, despise what he despises, go where he calls, walk where he shews the way, feek what he promifes, and do what he commands. Those who defire to be faved must follow this rule, and consequently are bound to forfake the world, fo far at least as it departs from the Gospel. Christ has fo commanded it, and there is no power on earth can dispense with this command: Happy then are they who wholly separate themselves from the world, and are no more subjects to its authority, nor exposed to its fnares, nor regard its cultoms; these are at great liberty for informing themselves of the Spirit of Christ, and have great advantages

for following it. Happy they too, who, though engaged in the world, make it their business to be faithful in whatever charge God has called them to; and as for all other things, being convinced of its injustice, neither make it the rule of their love, or their hatred; but esteeming all it admires to be folly and vanity, neglect its proposals, and endeavour to live by the spirit of Christ, that so they may come at length to the possession of him. As for all others, who, professing Christ, are more difciples of the world than of his Gospel, who admire its applauses, love and seek what it values, measure their happiness by its posfessions and satisfactions, let the authority of its pride and extravagance have the ordering their cloaths, their furniture, their retinue, their table; these I call upon with all the earnestness of a charitable compassion, soliciting them to think of changing their method; for that however they may be orthodox in faith, yet fince they have taken the world to be their master of morals, let this have the command of their time and their money, and live according to its spirit, they have so far renounced Christ; and how vain then must all their hopes be, fince serving the world, the falvation they expect must come from the world? , soul and shind) to may

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O God, enlighten, I befeech thee, the eyes of all Christians, that they may discern the ways of thy Gospel, and give them grace to follow then. May they be truly sensible how the world is an enemy to Christ, and that they cannot be his disciples who follow it. How different is thy spirit, O Jesus, from that of the world! Grant us this spirit, that we may be wholly subject to it, and by following its directions, be brought at length to a perfect union with thee.

and trans to live and one in the communities in that church an which they were baptined at a whether it be a care in any to fortake hat communion, and one wast one make way for two actives, these apolested that the careb as that an above remined to in

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SS. PHILIP and JAMES.

N the day of these apostles, it will not be an unseasonable subject to consider, whether it be good and advisable for all Christians to live and die in the communion of that church in which they were baptised; or whether it be a duty in any to forsake that communion, and join with another.

To make way for the answer, these apostles teach us, that to change religion is, in some cases, not only lawful and commendable, but likewise a duty necessary for salvation. For thus they did themselves, in leaving the communion of the Jewish church, in which they had been enrolled by circumcision (answerable to christian baptism), and by a solemn covenant made with the God of their fathers, and then becoming sollowers of Christ, that by so doing they might inherit the promises. And while Christ commanded all his apostles to preach his faith both to Jews and Gentiles, promising salvation to such as believed, and pronouncing

damnation against all such as believed not, Mark xvi. 16, it is plain that Christ required all to forlake the religion of their country and parents, as a condition neces-

fary to falvation. Judaism and Gentilifin to the christian faith, every one that confesses Christ must believe to be a necesfary duty; and that to let a fondness of education, of country, or parents, prevail against it, can be no less then damnable obstinacy. But can the like change be necesfary or reasonable amongst Christians?

The reasonableness of it seems not to be queltioned, if we can but suppose, that amongst the different communions of Christians there are fome better than others; for then there is place for choice; and in things belonging to eternity, it cannot but be reafonable at all times to chuse that which is best. Thus we do in all things that are but the concern of this fhort life; if we have a purchase to make, a house to buy, or to provide for cloaths or table, we have a geheral folicitude for chufing that which is best; and for affecting this, how industrious are we in confulting friends, in comparing one thing with another, in asking advice, examining into particulars, and taking time to confider? And how do we look upon

ourselves imposed on, or ill-treated, if those whom we employ make choice of the worse, when better, with a little more pains and

care, might have been found.

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Then are we not still more industrious in mending the fortune of our birth? He that is born under a thatched roof, does not think himself obliged to be content with that mean being; and all others, though in better circumstances, are still forward to improve the condition of their birth; and if they succeed, there is no scruple in enjoying the fruit of their labour. Now, if thus in all things we are folicitous for the best, and labour to improve what our parents left us; if this be what we commendably do in things that are but of a short duration, and the concern is not very great which way foever they be; must it not be more reasonable to take the fame method in things of eternity, in which we cannot do too much for our fecurity, and to answer the love God has shewn us, in what he has done for our falvation? Certainly, if in any case it can be reasonable to chuse the best, it must be so here; and it must be matter of a just reproach to those, who following the principle of bettering themselves in every thing elfe, make religion the only exception, resolve to be contented with that as they

find it, and lie still where they are dropt; as if this were the only indifferent thing that belonged to them, and deserved not to be

made a matter of choice. Lauthummon there

The reproof King David gave himfelf, more deservedly belongs to the men of these principles: See now, fays this king, I dwell in a house of cedar, but the ark of God dwelleth within curtains or under skins, 2 Sam. vil. 2. He had raised for himself a magnificent palace, in which he had spared nothing that could beautify or enrich it; but the ark of God was still under skins, as it had been brought out of the defert; and, upon reflection, he could not but accuse himself, of having been more folicitous for his own abode than for God; and the conviction of this injustice put him upon the resolution of building a temple; that fo he might have the fatisfaction of doing as much, at least, for God as for himfelf. And may not the like reflection work fomething upon men of these contented principles? For while these make it the business of their lives, to improve and change for the better in all their temporal concerns; and in religion only will allow no change, though for the better, but leave it wholly to the chance of their birth; what is this but to feek cedar for themselves, and leave the ark to the fkins of the defert?

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Nay, and how often, without making any due examination, whether their ark be the ark of God or no? If then, amongst the different communions of Christians, it be supposed, that some are better than others, it must be reasonable to seek and change for the best.

But if we suppose farther, that some of these communions are erroneous, and teach false doctrines; then to change from the wrong to the right, is not only reasonable, but likewife necessary. This necessity all those must own, who maintain the necessity of the reformation; because the principal design of this being to draw all persons from the communion of that church, in which they had been baptifed, to join with another; this cannot be justified as necessary, but upon this principle; that it is necessary to change from the wrong to the right; and to dispute this, is to question the whole undertaking. Every member therefore of the reformation must confess the necessity of forfaking an erroneous church.

But the case is otherwise clear from what the scripture teaches; for since we are there assured, that amongst Christians there will arise salse apostles, who will not spare the slock, but speak perverse things, to draw away disciples after them, Acts xx. 29: That

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many will be feduced by these deceitful workers, who transform themselves into the apolities of Christ: That there will be divifrons, feets, fehifms, and herefies: Since we are there farther taught, that all Christians ought to be watchful against these; that they are to be avoided, as persons, that fall from the truth; that God will fight against them; that herefy is numbered amongst the works of the flesh; that it is ranked with idolatry, adultery, and murder; and the apoltle declares of them all, That they, who do these things, Shall not inherit the kingdom of God, Gal. v. 21. Since, I fay, we are affured from scripture of these two points; First, That amongst Christians there will be false teachers, promoters of divisions and herefres adly, That these are to be avoided, as displeasing to God, and leading to perdition. It follows, from hence, that amongst Christians, there are some, who are as much obliged to forfake the communion of their church, as they are bound to quit the fins of adultery, idolatry or murder; and that this is a condition necessary to salvation. Neither can their having been baptifed in fuch a communion, be any plea for abiding in it; because, not only the true church of Christ, but likewife the congregations above mentioned, guilty of schism and herely, adminis-

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ter baptism. And since God requires all to abandon such congregations; this command falls even upon those who were baptised in them. For baptism, which makes us the children of God, cannot possibly bring any obligation upon us, of being disobedient to God, and of living in a state of sin. All such then as have received their baptism from the hands of false teachers, are as much bound to forsake them as any others; because God commands them to seek the truth, and they cannot be united to truth, but by breaking from those who detain them in sinful errors.

But if we suppose still farther, that, asthere is but one God, and one faith, so there is but one true church of Christ, as it is in the Nicene creed; that this one church is the mystical body of Christ; that Christ is the heap of this body: That Christ is the Saviour of this body, Eph. v. 23. That to partake of the influence of the head, there is a necessity of being a member of this body; that, according to the fentiments and practice of the primitive church, all congregations, which diffent from this body, are cut off from the church, are under the guilt of herefy or schism, and consequently separated from the head, who is Christ; that being separated from him, they have no part in his promises. If this, I say, can be supposed

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from scripture and the ancient church, then it is confequent, that in whatever congregation a Christian has been baptised, if it was not in communion with the one true church. he is bound to leave the communion of fuch a congregation, and incorporate himself a member of the true church, that so he may be in communion with the head, and in the participation of his merits, through which alone he can be faved. Hence Christ has made it the interest of all to feek for his church, that by being members of his body, they may be united to him; and it is fo far from being dishonourable to change from any other congregation to this; that fuch a change has all the honour, which truth, juftice, and the will of God, can give it. Here can be no blemish of temporizing or inconstancy, any more than there was in the apostles, in forfaking the religion of their parents and country, to follow Christ; for this is following Christ; and for any to perfift in any other communion, because they were baptised in it, is nothing; but being conflant in error, constant in going out of the way, which has neither virtue nor honour in it, according to the Gospel scheme.

However therefore in our prefent age, fome have brought all Christian communions fo much upon the level, as to make one

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monstrous body of so many disunited and incoherent parts; and others have made the difference so inconsiderable, that a change is not worth running the hazard of what the world will fay, and that the circumstance of baptism is more to be regarded than any advantage of truth; yet I cannot but fear, these are so many salvos in favour of errors and floth: I am certain they are notions unknown to antiquity, and therefore cannot but be furprifed, that fo many persons of feeming piety, of learning and fenfe, should rest all their hopes of salvation on a system contrived for present service, contrary to the fense and practice of the church established by the apostles, which ought to be our pat-O God, I befeech thee, to give to all, who confess our Lord Jesus, a greater value for that church, which he purchased with his blood; give them a greater value for unity and peace; that fince he hath manifested his will, they may follow that; as the only way to falvation, and not let thance take place of it, nor contrive dispensations for finding peace in disobedience. Heaven, O God, is in thy power alone, and there isno way of gaining it, but by doing thy will: How perverfely blind then are men to pretend to heaven, and yet not to do thy to much upon the level, as, to mulliw

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Invention of the Holy Cross.

ON this festival we cannot have a more proper subject, than to speak of sacred images, amongst which the cross will have

its place.

As we are men, we keep the pictures and images of our parents, ancestors, benefactors, governors, or others, who by great actions have engaged posterity to preserve their memory: As we are Christians, we keep the pictures and images of Christ, the B. Virgin, apostles, and other holy servants of God, who, by their virtuous lives, and constancy at their deaths, have taught sus how to live to God, and how to die for him. The former fort of pictures we keep in our houses, where we live and converse as men: The others in our churches, chapels, and closets, where we live as Christians, and converse with God. And both the one fort and the other we let up, as becoming ornaments of the respective places, as memorials of the persons represented, and as expresfions of the respect, honour, and love, we have

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have for the objects they represent. If therefore we are demanded; why we keep the pictures of our parents, children, king, &c. it is, because we defire to preserve their memory, defire often to think of them, and to flew them fomething of that love and respect we have for them. And if it be demanded of us, why we keep the pictures of Christ and his saints? It is for the same reason, that we may preserve their memory, often think of them, express something of that love and honour we have for them. And by looking on their pictures, be often reminded of the example they have given us; as likewife have our hearts possessed with the pious affections which they fuggeft.

This is the end for which pictures or images of holy things are made, and this is the use; which none can dispute but by stifling nature, and disputing against the experience of all mankind. Neither has God forbidden it, but rather given encouragement to it. For though the words of the first (or second) commandment seem to be a prohibition; yet this cannot be the meaning of them, because then, making the likeness of any thing in heaven, or on earth, or in the waters, (which are all there expressly mentioned) would be a breach of the commandment, and no picture whatever.

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could be made without a fin: Which was never the fense of any christian yet. And that this is not the fenfe of that commandment, God himfelf has fufficiently declared, who after the folemn promulgation of this law, gave express order for making and fetting up the images of cherubims at the ends of the mercy-feat, and promifed that from between these two cherubins, he would fpeak to Moses, of all the things which he had to speak concerning the children of Ifrael, Two cherubims shalt thou make of gold; of beaten work shall thou make them in the two ends of the mercy-feat, Exod. xxvi 18,122. Now God giving order for these sacred images to be made, and to be fet over the ark, and in the place which he had chofen for himself, is proof enough, that he had not forbidden them to be made, and confequently, that the making them, and fetting them up in holy places, has an encouragement from God himself, who, instead of forbidding, commanded the doing it, guil

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This then is not to be disputed, where there is any regard to God's Word; pictures and images of things in heaven may be made lawfully, as of things on earth, and likewise be set in places sacred to the worship of God, without any breach of the commandment. But a farther question is, whether any respect or veneration is to be given

to facred images? And here the answer feems obvious; that fince it is impossible for us to have a true love or fenfe of Gods but we must likewise have a veneration for all things that are facred to his worship, or are any other way nearly related to him; as we cannot but have a veneration for the church, because it is the place dedicated to God's worship; to the book of the Gospel, because it contains his doctrine; to the holy vessels, because they are appropriated to his service: So we cannot have a true love for Christ, but we must have a respect and veneration for his picture, which has for particular as relation to thim, as not only to represent him, but likewise to excite in us a lively remembrance of his infinite mercies and love to man, and, at the same time, put us immind of the great debt of love and fervice which we owe him. Where there is fo particular a relation to the person of Christ. and hosparticular a help in his fervice, for raising our gratitude and love, I appeal to all mankind, whether it be possible to have a true love for Christ, and yet not to have a love, respect, and veneration for his picture. which has foreminent a relation to him and his flervice to the places facted to the solvent side

But abstracting at present from his service, let the world, from its uniform experience

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een answer, whether, whatever the affection of our mind be towards any person, the same does not extend to his picture? As to those to whom we are indifferent, we have the fame indifferency for their pictures. If we are averse to any for their vice, oppression, or a natural dislike, we cannot see their pictures but with a like aversion and contempt. And who can fay, that where they have a true love, a real honour and efteem for any person they have not likewife a love and esteem for his picture, defire to have it by them, are pleafed in looking upon it, give it the most honourable place, and value it above other things, which in price are ten times the value? If this be true, then must it not be allowed, that they who love Christ with all their hearts, and are sensible of his infinite love in the work of our redemption must have a love for his picture, be glad to have it by them, be pleased in looking at it, give it the most honourable place, and value it above other things of a much greater value: And that this is both a confequence and argument of their real love of Christ, as in like cases it is of other persons.

If this can be allowed, that we may have a love for Christ's picture, as for the pictures of other persons, whom we really honour and love; then, as in regard of other perfons, this love is originally either fenfual, or of friendship, or of esteem for their merits or virtue, according to the love we bear the persons; so in regard of Christ, it must be a love of admiration and gratitude, which may be properly called a holy love, a holy respect or veneration: And the whole comes to be no more than this; that the love, respect, honour and veneration we have for Christ, obliges us to have a love, respect, honour and veneration for his pictures, as for all other things, that have any eminent relation to him, as for his holy name, the place of his worship, and for persons and things appropriated to his fervice. And now, divines with their distinctions, or adversaries by their niceties and cavils, raise here a confusion by their disagreement in modes and terms; this ought to be no more an exception, in a matter otherwise as plain and obvious, as an universal experience can make it, than it is against our seeing or hearing, or the motion of the stars, because men of learning can come to no agreement about them. It is enough for us, that we know we love the pictures of the persons whom we love, as certainly as we know that we fee and hear; and what fignify the disputes of bow and how far, or Whether it be the same or different? These cannot invalidate matters of

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fact; heither need we be afraid of going on, because of the dust or dugbears which they raise in the way. on shumin then ent

But if we have an honour, belove, and veneration for the pictures of Christ, &. How may this be outwardly expressed? In any of those ways, by which we usually ex-press these affections of the mind, as by bowing, uncovering the head, killing; and because, in the church, it is a common practice to express respect by candles and incense, as to the altar, the book of the gospels, to the priest, the deacon, the people; there can be no just exception against thus expressing our respect to the pictures of Christ: Because, where the respect is due, there is no fault in the outward expressions of it; especially, when it is done in fuch a manner, as is usual in other cases of like respect; as it in these, which are not confined to the divine worthip, but are outwardly the fame both to God, and all that belongs to him; and likewife to man to whom we shew our respect not only by bowing and kneeling, but likewife, upon occasions of joy, by lighted candles and perfumes. All these actions then being diftinguished by the intention and affections of the heart, fo as by the different motions of this to be fometimes divine, fometimes holy, formetimes civil, fometimes an empty formality, flattery, treachery, or fenfuality; they cannot deserve reproof, where they are serious, if the heart intends no more than to express that veneration which is due to the thing to which it is given. Thus if we bow and uncover our heads to magistrates, because they are God's vicegerents; if we kiss the bible, because it is a facred volume; if we bow to the name of Jesus, because it is holy; if we take off our hats, when we go through a church, because it is a holy place; if we bow to the altar, because it is the seat of holy mysteries, we in these actions do no more than express the inward respect we have for these things; and therefore, if this respect be rational and just, the expression of it in actions usual in like cases must be rational and just; and so likewise in respect of pictures or images of Christ and his faints.

But is there no more than this done to the cross, since in the hymn of this feast, there is a prayer directed to it; O crux, ave spes unica, piis adauge gratiam, reisque dele crimina: Hail, O cross, our only hope, increase grace in the good, and cancel the debts of sinners. And on Good Friday, when adoration is paid to it? It must be owned, there are such words in the hymn; but those, who reslect, how often S. Paul takes this liberty of using this word cross, for Christ crucified,

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Left they should suffer persecution for the erosis of Christ. God forbid, that I should glory, fave in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ: Will easily allow the same in this piece of poetry, and hence discover, that we no more pray to the cross, than Saint Paul gloried in the cross alone: Such figurative expressions are so common in all books, and even in the Holy Scripture, that they must be very willing to be deceived, who take offence at this; and they must be in great want of objections, who lay hold of such advantages.

There is more appearance for the exception in the ceremony of Good Friday; and yet how can they who believe there is but one only God, and he a pure spirit, be now thought upon one ceremony, to take a piece of wood for God, or worship it as God? Those who have charity, would instead of judging thus, enquire, what is the meaning of the ceremony, and whether we may not kneel down and kifs the crofs, without making it our God? And to give them fome light, I ask of these, who are so difficult in understanding it; If they were on Good Friday upon Mount Calvary, and should fee there pious christians upon their knees bowing down, adoring, and proftrate kissing the ground, where the cross once

stood; would they presently judge these to be idolaters, and that they worshipped that Mount for their God? A heathen might think for I confess; who believed nothing of Christ, or what he suffered; but sure a christian might have better thoughts, and be for charitable as to believe, that what these did, was only to express their gratitude and love to Christ, who for them shed his blood in that place. If this may be underflood, then let those who take offence at this ceremony know, that on Good Friday, the cross is a Mount Calvary to us; that we bow down, and proftrate kifs it, as we would do that facred Mount, were we then upon it, in acknowledgement of Christ's infinite love to us, and of the mercy we have received by his dying for us; that we no more take the cross for Christ, or adore it for our Redeemer, than those christians do the Mount. And that whilft we thus express the affections of our soul to our crucified Lord; yet should any enemy of our faith tell us that the cross is our God, and threatens us with torments, if we did not, as fuch, worship it, and pray to it; we should, through the divine grace, as readily chuse death here, as if we were commanded to worship the idols of the heathens. This is what our religion teaches us; to honour

the cross and kiss it in memory of his wounds (as Jacob might have done Joseph's coat, when he wept loves it land supposed him dead) but rather die than make it our idol. In this is plain sense and truth, and fuch as one would think might be eafily understood by all ; and for believe it would, were there ino more art sufed for dilguifing the truth, than there is strue defire of knowing it The difficulty of this whole point is no more, than uncovering the head to the chair of state, or killing the bible; and yet fee what uncharitable debates there are about it. O God; thou knowest bur hearts, that we believe thee our only God, that we hope and put our trust in thee alone, and detest the abomination of giving thy honour to another. To thee we appeal, who knowest the truth and justice of our caused It is fome comfort, that we are judged here unjustly by men; because Christ is our example in this, has foretold it to his fervants, and promised it a bleffing : But our greater comfort is, that our eternal lot is in thy hands, who judgest according to justice slaup fuch pictures and images, ignorant people may not be drawn toto dolatry, believe fome divinity in Lagrethern, gray to them. and put their truft in them? Because to they som to do, while in their gray is they als

the and control of the control of the control of the wounds (as Jacob might have done Joseph's coat, when ki wept avd it Uand supposed him dead) but rather die than make it our ons Matibitys of S. John Barrist. lobi fuch as one would think might be easily To Aving diffeourfed on laft Helyldaptof the images of Christ and his Saints, and there being fomething more to be faid on this fubject, I take the liberty of udding it here; not thinking it at all incongruous, on faints days, to publish and clear the doc. trine and practice of the churchest bey land and thereofhewed, that every faithful foul that believes in, and honours God, as God, must have a veneration for all holy things, which have any eminent relation to him and his fervice, and confequently for the pictures or images of Christ and his faints, because of their eminent relation to those whom they represent, and the great help they are to us, in raising our minds to heaven, and quickening us with a defire of following their example. But now the question may be, whether, by the use of fuch pictures and images, ignorant people may not be drawn into idolatry, believe fome divinity to be in them, pray to them, and put their trust in them? Because so they feem to do, whilst in their prayers they life

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up their hands and eyes to the images before them, bow down to them; and how often are they feen to throng about fome particular image, with a more than ordinary confidence of having their petitions granted; and afterwards cover the neighbouring walls with their prefents in acknowledgement of the

favours received.

As to this question, there can be no difficulty in owning, that as there has been great abuses in this point, even mentioned by S. Augustin, De mor. Eccl. 6- 34, fpeaking of the unlearned multitude; info there may be still. But if the church has taken due care to prevent all such abuses, then these are not to be charged upon her, as the effects of her doctrine; because her doctrine is positively to disclaim them, and likewise to provide against them. Let it be observed what she teaches; First, That as to the images of Christ, &c. no divinity is to be imagined to be in them, adly, That there is no power or virtue in them. 3dly, That nothing is to be asked of them.
4thly, That no confidence is to be placed in them. 5thly, That if any representation be made of God, that the people be taught, that God is a spirit, that he cannot be seen by mortal eyes, that the divinity cannot be exprest by any figure, or drawn in colours.

amongst the faithful, she earnestly desires they should be rooted out, and recommends it to all Bishops, to see that the faithful be thus taught and no superstition tolerated amongst them. All these particulars may be gathered out of one chapter of the council of Trent, Sess. 25. Now if this be observed, who can say that any abuses in this point are taught, or even favoured by the church; or, that her doctrine is to be charged with whatever superstitions are found amongst the people; since her doctrine is contrary to them, and the suppression of them is given in commission to her pastors? There might be as much reason to impeach lawgivers of all the crimes of those, who break their laws, as the church, of this.

But now as to the matter or fact, it is true, that both the ignorant and others pray in the posture described, with their hands up, and eyes fixt on a picture or image, and often bowing themselves down; and in the same manner they pray at other times, when they have no picture before them, but have their eyes fixt on the walls, wainstot, ceiling, or a landskip of Arras, as it may happen: Now what argument is this that they pray to pictures, any more than

that at other times they pray to the walls? If their be eyes be open, they must be fixt on some object; sandriftshir be evidence enough for by standers to judge what they pray to and adore, then who can be exempt from the fcandal of idolatry, but those who never pray? All this then is no better than trifling: it must be allowed athere is no fob ligation of praying with our eyes that , wand if dun eyes, when open, must be directed to fomething, why not rather to fome picture of Christ crucified which may be fome help in confining and enflaming our shoughts, than to any thing elfe, which may be the traction to us; b for this reasons thengr when we go to church, we turn to the altar', and there being a crucifix; the greatest numbers likely, have their eyes upon it Iv Now if strangers coming in, and observing this, presently judge, it is That we worship and pray to: This judgment is rash; and Daniel might with the fame justice be accused for worshipping the east, because he dalways bowed that way. Thefe, before they judge ought to inform themselves, what our faith and doctrine is; and when they have feen what we are taught, as above; that there is but one only God, that all good must come from him; that images are only reprefentations of holy things, fit to prevent distractions, and recal our wandering thoughts to God; that there is no power or virtue in them; that we are neither to pray to them, nor confide in them; may not this lead them to a more moderate judgment, and give them reason to hope, that however the outward action feems furprifing, yet we cannot be so strangely stupid, as to act expressly contrary to what we believe, especially in such a matter, where common fense is enough to inform us of the absurdity? So much charity as this, might be reasonably expected; for while the heathens find fuch favour from our learned adverfaries, as to be judged not so stupid, as to worship and pray to stocks and stones, the work of their own hands; why may not this charity reach us, who have have both our councils, catechifms, and the professions of our faith to prepare them for this more favourable construction? But why then fuch crowding about fome particular images, if they had not fome more than ordinary confidence in them above others? For the fame reason, that the blind and lame crowded about the pool, by the sheep-market in Jerusalem, called Bethesda, John v. 2. If God is pleased to manifest the wonders of his power, for the relief of the miserable, in one place more than in another, there can be no more furprise in

feeing the miferable thronging there, than in finding those doors most crowded with beggars, where they have generally most relief. We fee this pool was particularly chosen above all others, as was Jordan for the cure of Nauman, and the pool Siloam, for giving fight to the blind, John ix. 7. If then God has in like manner fignalifed any particular chapels, as he did the pools, by fome miraculous effects of his goodness, this is like a call to the diffressed, who being folicitous for help, will certainly come there to feek it, where they have most reason to hope for fuccess; and still with a confidence as entire in God as those might have, who went to the fish-pool to be cured; fince whatever the chapel, whatever the crucifix, image, or picture be, they know the power is wholly of God, and that the place of manifesting it, is his free choice.

But what means the custom of fastening presents to the walls of some chapels, and that these are covered with arms, legs, and eyes of wax, &c. These are grateful memorials of savours received, the supposed effect of prayers offered there; and are no more matter of wonder, than to hear of Jacob's setting up a stone as a remembrance of God's appearing and speaking to him in a vision, Gen. xxviii. 18. Or Joshua's

commanding twelve flones to be fet in Fordany to serve as a monument of God's goodness, and a memorial to generations of his carrying the children of Ifrael through Jordan, into the land of promise, Josh. iv. 7. If christians have reason to believe they have received fignal favours from God, it is no more a fault in them to be grateful, than in the Jew; and if they fet up memorials at the place, the instances mentioned will justify the doing it. Though primitive christianity gives unquestionable authority; since this very practice is recorded by Theodoret, as observed by the christians of his time, and being approved then, cannot justly be condemned now. it shared of land the said of the

Thus stands this point, and upon a due consideration of the whole, I cannot but hope, there may be some accommodation in it; I do not mean with those who carry on all by a blind passion, but with men of moderation. For since the church has positively declared against all abuses, and the superstitious use of images, and required that they be abolished: Since she declares they have neither power to hear or help: Since she encourages them as the ornament of churches, the remembrance of holy histories, and as the memorials of God's power and goodness, sit for raising devotion and gratitude: Since

the judges them uncapable of all honour for themselves, and numbering them amongst things confecrated to God's service, declares them honourable only, upon his account, for his fake to whom they belong, like all other instruments of religion : Since this is due, and in her profession of faith the requires no other honour to be given them, than what is due, Debitum Honorem ac venerationem impertiendam: Since the declares all her ceremonies regarding them, to be no more than an expression of this honour; there feems no more in this than what I find allowed by moderate men of other communions; and the difference that remains dis chiefly in terms or words, in which frome would think, there might be a possibility of coming to a right understanding. Themphy

This seems to be the sentiment of Gratus, who thinks, that if the ambiguous words, which by their various acceptation distract the minds of men, were set aside (namely, invocation, adoration, worship, religion, honour:) And if in the things themselves, the indifferent were distinguished from the unlawful, there would be sewer seeds of contention: Judgm. of Rel. It is plain enough we use all these words in a much larger sense than others are willing to take them. But since they are owned by all to

be equivocal, common justice will allow us the liberty of declaring the fense in which we are them; and if the fense be fuch as others approve, is it not pity that peace should be broken, and very disedifying contentions kept up for terms only? In trivial matters fuch disputes are neither agreeable to common civility, or good nature; and they must be owned the effect of a wrangling temper, or of passion. In matters of religion therefore, they ought to be banished; and the precept of charity, and keeping peace, fo much recommended in the Gospel, ought to be a fufficient motive to it. Grant this fpirit, I befeech thee, O God, to all that profess thy name; that while there is so much scandal in division, and such severe judgments threatened against the promoters of it, all may study to compose differences, and not widen them. Thou haft given fufficient encouragement, in the promise of a bleffing to peace-makers; may all, who defire thy bleffing, feek it in the study of a common peace; and by this character may all labour to give proof of being the disciples as lawful, there would be tever sulet to contention: Judgm: of Rei. It is plan enough we use all linds words in a much larger fente than ortest are willing to rake abem, But muce they are owned by all .

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S. Peter and S. Paul.

THOUGH both these Apostles seem to have an equal share in this festival; yet since the former only is the subject of general debate amongst christians, our present discourse shall be confined to him, in an enquiry, whether he had the privilege of any dignity and authority above the rest of the Apostles: In which matter the Holy Scripture, amongst others, affords us these arguments, in favour of the affirmative.

First, In the particular name given him by Christ, in reward of the confession of his divinity; And I say to thee, that thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church. Mat. xvi. 18. This name imports a particular prerogative, of being a rock, and the foundation of that building, which Christ was to raise, his church. And S. Jerome, in his paraphrase upon this text, says, That, as when Christ called his Apostles the light of the world, and salt of the earth, he communicated to them spiritual qualities answerable to such names: So also, when he gave to Simon the name of Peter, or Rock, it was

not sermone casso & nullum habente opus; not with an empty word, which has no force or efficacy in it, but making him to be what he called him; fo that according to the metaphor of a rock, it is rightly and properly said to Peter ; Edificabo ecclesiam meam super te ; I will build my church upon Thee: Thus this father reasons, as S. Paul had done in another case, who made this argument to prove, that Christ transcended the angels in the excellency of his nature; because he had obtained a more excellent name than they, Heb. i. 4. Now if there be any strength in this reasoning upon the same it may be justly pressed, that, whereas Christ said to Simon only, and to no other of his Apostles: Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church: He communicated to him fome fingular prerogative, in which he excelled all his brethren.

This seems to be the sense of the Apostles themselves, at least, after the coming of the Holy Ghost, in the several registers lest of their names; in which, though the rest of the Apostles are never named in order; yet Peter is every where set in the head of the catalogue, which cannot be imputed to chance, or to the will of the writer; for then his name might have been differently placed like the rest, but to the direction of

the Holy Ghost, and the appointment of Christ, which no evangelist could alter. Neither could this be for the take of order only; for what reason could there be for so much exactness in one and in none of the rest? If twelve are to be numbered, and all are equal, what fignifies the ceremony of fetting one always in the head? Why should S. Matthew give him the title of Primus, Mat. x. 2. The first Simon, who is called Peter. If he had been first called by Christ, or first in age, there might have been some colour for it; but as it was, there can be no better reason for this exactness observed by the evangelists, than that Peter was first in order, because he was first in dignity and authority amongst them; and so it is expounded by the fathers of the first ages, who give him the titles of Prince, Chief, Head, and Greatest of the Apostles.

This is confirmed from the solemn promise made by Christ to S. Reter, and to him alone, that he would give him the keys of the kingdom of heaven; Tibi dabo claves regnicalorum: To thee will I give the keys of the kingdom of heaven, Mat. xvi. 19. And what could this be, but the supreme power and authority of governing his church; fince the word keys, not only in scripture phrase, but from the general acceptation,

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and even practice of the world, fignifies that superiority or supreme power, with which a person is invested to govern a family, city, or kingdom; and the delivery of the keys is a delivery of such power? And though the power of binding and loosing, which is an effect of the keys, was promised to all the Apostles; yet it is not read in Scripture, that the keys themselves, the proper token and badge of the supreme stewardship over the church, were promised to the rest, but to Peter alone. And when was this promise suffilled, but a little before Christ's ascension into heaven, when after a second confession, how much he loved him, he gave him power, and this in the presence of the disciples, to feed, not only his lambs but his sheep, in which are included all the faithful, of what degree or pre-eminence soever?

That this whole exposition of Scripture relating to S. Peter, may not seem arbitrary or new, I will add here the sentiments of the ancient and most eminent sathers in Christ's church, upon this subject. S. Cyril of Alexandria, l. 2. in Joan. c. 1. Christ foretels Peter, that his name shall be no longer Simon, but Peter: Very sitly intimating by that name, that he intended to build his church upon him, as upon a rock and most firm stone. And again, l. 12. c. 19. Peter sirst cries out as the prince and head

of the rest; Thou art Christ the Son of the

living God.

S. Bafil ad c. 2. Ifa. By this word Peter, we understand the Son of Jonas, who, because he excelled the rest in faith, had the

church built upon him.

S. Cyprian ep. 69. There Peter speaks, upon whom the church was built. And ep. 40. God is one, one Christ, one church, and one chair, founded upon Peter, by the word of Christ. And ep. 73. Christ gave this power first to Peter, upon whom he built his church, and from whence he instituted and declared the origin of unity.

S. Chryfostom, Ho. 2. de Panit. in Ps. 50, Did not Peter, that pillar of the church, that foundation of the faith, that head of the Apostles, deny his master three several times? And Hom. 3. in Act. How zealous. is Peter! How sensible that the flock was committed to his charge by Christ? How does he shew himself the chief in this council!-He being chief of all, with reason uses authority in this affair, as having them all in his power. For Christ says to him, Do you, being converted, confirm your brethren. And l. 2. de Sacerdot. c. 1. For what reason did Christ shed his blood? Certainly to gain those sheep, the care of which he committed to Peter and his fuccessors.

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St Ambrose, 1. 10, in Luc. ad c. 24. Christ did not doubt, neither did he ask to learn, but to teach who it was he would leave behind him as vicar of his love. Because he alone, amongst all, confesses Christ, he is preferred before all. He commands him to feed his sheep, that so he being the more perfect, might govern those that are

more perfect.

St Jerome, l. 1. adv. Pel. c. 4. As Plate was prince of the philosophers, so was Peter of the apostles, upon whom the church of Christ was firmly built. And l. 1 adv. Jovin c. 14. You affirm that the church is founded upon Peter; although in another place it is said to be built upon all the apostles, and that all of them received the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and have the church established equally upon them; nevertheless, one of the twelve is chosen, to the end that a head being appointed, the occasion of schisin may be taken away.

St Augustin in Ps. 69. Peter, who, a little before, confessed Christ to be the Son of God; and upon that profession had been called the rock, on which the church was to be built; soon after, when our Lord was speaking of what he was to suffer, replied, Far be it from thee, Lord. And 1. 2. de Bapt. cont. Don. c 1. he quetes these words of

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St Cyprian: For neither Peter, who was the first chosen by our Lord, and upon whom he built his church, did any thing infolently take upon him, when Paul argued with him concerning the circumcifion, or arrogantly tell him, that he held the primacy, and that he ought to be obeyed by new converts. Then goes on: Behold, where Cyprian recounts, as we have likewife learnt from the holy scriptures, how the apostle Peter, in whom the primacy of the apostles is so eminently resplendent, being urged to treat with the Jews about circumcifion, otherwise than truth required, was reprehended by Paul. And a little after. I am of opinion, that, without any injury, Cyprian the bishop may be compared, in point of martyrdom, to the apoltle Peter. Yet I ought to be afraid of undervaluing Peter; for who is there that does not know that the headship of the apostles is more excellent than any bishopric !

In these words do these eminent lights of Christ's church deliver their sense of this point. In which these two particulars are evident; that they had read the same texts of scripture above cited, of what Christ speaks to Peter; and understood by them, that Christ gave to Peter, not only a primacy of order, but built his church upon him,

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Now this is not so to be understood, as to exclude Christ from being the rock and foundation on which the church is built; for as he is the head and corner-stone, so he is the foundation too; but only that he appointed Peter the ministerial head, and lest him the commission of superintendancy over the church, for the prevention of schisms, and preservation of unity, without which the church could not subsist. As therefore in the civil government, Christ's being supreme governor, does not exclude a supreme visible head, so neither in the church.

Neither does it exclude the other apostles from being the foundations of the church, in as much as they received power from Christ of preaching the Gospel, and founding churches throughout the world; and had the power of the keys given them, in which St Cyprian, and other fathers say, they were all equal; but only, that, as the church was, by Christ's appointment, to be one, so the origin of unity should be in one, and a power left with that one, to answer the end of the institution in the preservation of unity. This seems to be the sense of St Cyprian,

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who puts the objection, and answers it: Quamvis apostolis omnibus, post resurrectionem suam, parem potestatem tribuat, — tamen, ut unitatem manifestaret, unitatis ejustem originem ab uno incipientem sua autoritate disposuit. L. de Unit Eccl.

Neither does it set St Peter above all reproof, if he does what is notoriously reprovable: And hence it is no wonder St Paul withstood him, Gal. ii. 11. For whatever the power be, if it does not exempt from oversight or sin, it cannot be an exemption from reproof; and how often is this from

an inferior?

Neither does this suppose, but these words of Christ, Upon this rock I will build my church, may be understood of St Peter's faith, and the confession of Christ's divinity; for since this confession of his was the motive, why Christ gave this preference to Peter, the church may be truly said to be built upon his faith; and so it is generally expressed by all the fathers after the council of Nice, who knowing how much the defence of the Catholic cause against the Arians, depended upon this confession of Peter, were not wanting in their commendations of it; especially, since in this sense, they might prosecute the Arians, as persons that endeavoured to overthrow the very

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foundation of the church. But fince this exposition was particularly taken up against the Arians, and the other was more primitive, as may be seen in Tertullian, Origen, and St Cyprian, and they do not interfere with one another; the allowing this does not exclude St Peter from being the person on whom Christ built his church, any more than it excludes St Peter from being the instrument of curing the lame man at the temple gate, because he told him it was not he and John, that by their own power had made him walk, but the faith, which is by Jesus Christ.

But that I may not transgress, let us turn now to God, and give him thanks for all the mercies of Jesus Christ in the establishment of his church, with an acknowledgment, that whatever he ordained for the preservation of its unity, was to us an incomprehensible blessing of peace. Let us beg grace, never to make void the designs of his goodness, by too positive an adhesion to private opinions; but that with an entire freedom of spirit, we may surrender ourselves to his conduct; and upon this submission lay the hopes of coming at length to his promises.

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St JAMES.

N last holyday we made some enquiry into the manner how Christ sounded his church, and what order he left for its government, and preserving it in unity; and both from the words of scripture, and the exposition given of them by the primitive fathers, the best commentators of holy writ, found fufficient motives for believing that Christ built his church not only on St Peter's faith, but on his person, in recompense of his faith, and appointed him the substitute or minister of his power over the whole flock, for removing of schisms, and the prefervation of its general unity and peace. Now we are to take one step farther, and enquire whether there be any reason to believe that this was only a temporary ordinance, restrained to his person and the time of the apostles; or whether the power given to him was defigned as an inheritance to his fuccessors, for answering the purposes of the first institution.

In this question we cannot expect much assistance from the words of scripture, be-

cause this gives no account of things beyond the time of the apostles, nor even so far. But however, fince St Paul fays, That Christ bas set some in the church, first apostles, then prophets, Sc. for the edifying of the body of Christ, till we all meet in the unity of faith, that we be not like children, carried about with every wind of doctrine, Eph. iv. 11. This gives a sufficient motive to conclude, that as the church was instituted by Christ, to it was to continue to the end of the world; especially as to all that was necessary for the support of the body, and preferving its unity; and confequently, that, as in the other aposles, so in Peter, the power given by Christ was to be derived to their succesfors, for otherwise the body could not fubfist.

This reason farther considered, will give light to the question: For if this was the principal means to prevent schisms and dissensions in the primitive church, when the graces of God were far more abundant and eminent than they now are; nay, if the twelve were not like to agree, except there had been one chief amongst them; for, says St Jerome, among the twelve one was therefore chosen, that a chief being appointed, occasion of dissension might be prevented; how can it be thought that equality would

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keep all the pastors in the world in peace and unity for in all focieties, authority (which cannot be where all are equal) mult procure unity and obedience. For though the feveral kingdoms of feveral princes make each of them an absolute and several common-wealth; yet the feveral congregations, dispersed throughout several kingdoms, do all of them make but one fpiritual common-wealth and church of Christ, obliged in duty to the belief and profession of one and the same faith. Now, how can the divided members of the church, dispersed in feveral kingdoms and nations, be governed, unless some one have authority over them all? If this were not, Christ's church would be in a far worse case than the meanest common-wealth; nay, almost than a den of thieves, if it were left destitute of means, either to convince herefies, or suppress them. Since therefore God would have one catholic church throughout the world, it was necessary he should chuse some father of his people, to whom, and to whose successors, the whole world should belong, and be one sheepfold; and by this means, out of all nations, however infinitely difagreeing in manners, should be made one church ninge n

Again, there is the fame reason for an universal pastor, or supreme head on earth,

over all other pastors and churches, as there is for a national pattor or primate in any kingdomip For if this be necessary, that the whole national church, confilling of provinces, and divided into dioceles, may be maintained uniform in worthip; that there be no divisions, schifms, herefies, contempts, irregular proceedings, among pastors and people; the fame necessity there is for an univerfal pastor: Because whoever considers what the church of Christ is, must, from the effential notion of it, fee the same necesfity of uniting national churches in the catholic or universal church, as there is for uniting provinces and diocefes in a national church; and confequently, that the necessity is equal for an univerfal pastor, as for a national or primate. For by how much the more universal the church is, by so much the more universal the pastoral charge and jurisdiction must be: And as the national church is to the universal visible church; so the national paftor to the universal pastor, by a mathematical proportion. And the like ground of relation, as is betwixt a national paftor and a national church, confiding of dioceles and provinces, is also betwint an occumenical paftor, and an occumenical church, confilling of nations. And if unity, uniformity, and regular administration Pv

of church government be indispensibly neceffary in a national church, and the care of these things to be committed primarily and principally to a national pastor; how much more is it necessary in the catholic church, constituted and made up of national churches; the care of which is to be committed to an occumenical or catholic paftor? And if the schism of a province or diocese be of fo dangerous confequence to a national church, how much more dangerous will the schism be of a national to the catholic

church?

look back to the monthworks Hence it follows, that as many as maintain the government of the church by bishops, archbishops, and primates, must also own an universal visible pastor, and this from the very nature or essence of the catholic visible church: Because it must be owned, either an organized or unorganized body, that is, made up of disagreeing parts, which have no communion with one another. This latter cannot be allowed by fuch afferters, because of the gross absurdities tending to separation and fanaticism, that must necessarily follow upon such a conces-If they fay it is an organized body, which is most suitable to the order of the catholic church, and to the wisdom of its founder; that she should be made up of the

most curious texture, and the most proportionate adaption of parts; it is by no means to be supposed, that a visible body, eminent in all other parts, should want a visible head; an invisible headship only, to a visible, organized, living body, cannot in this sense be allowed, nor a secular headship to this spiritual body.

Hitherto from reason, considering the nature of Christ's church, which being one body, must have in it that authority which is necessary for its unity. And now, if we look back to the primitive times, we shall find motives for believing that the ancient Christians acknowledged such an authority, and that the successor of St Peter was vested with it.

Thou canst not deny but thou knowest that the episcopal chair was first erected at Rome by Peter, in which Peter sat the head of the apostles; for which reason he was also called Cephas; that in this one chair, unity might be preserved amongst all; and that the other apostles might not every one maintain other seats for themselves, in opposition to this. So that he would be a schismatic and sinner, whoever should set up another chair against this one. In this sits Siricias, who is at this day our contemporary, with whom

we and the whole world hold communion by circular epiftles, and agree as one body.

St Gregory Naz. de Creat. Ep. Doar. sorites thus of the bishop of Rome. We do not contemn or revile that great pastor, who governs that magnificent city: We know him to be honourable, we acknowledge him head, we style him holy, notwithstanding the injury we suffer; only we desire he will shew himself an indulgent and tender father to his children, and diligently take care of the whole church.

St Athanasius, Apol. 2, Applying himself to Julius, bishop of Rome, relates the letter written by Julius to the Arian bishops: Are you ignorant, that according to the received custom, you ought first to have written to us, that hence what was just might have been determined? If therefore any such suspicion had been conceived of a bishop, it ought to have been referred hither to our church. What you have done, was neither the ordinance of Paul, nor taught you by the fathers. I signify nothing to you, but what we have received from the blessed apost-tle Peter.

St Chryfostom, 1. 2, de Sacerd. c. 1. For what reason did Christ shed his blood? Certainly to gain those sheep, the care of which he committed to Peter and his successors.

And in Libel. Supp. presented to Innocentius I. bishop of Rome, he desires him to repeal the sentence passed against him by Theophilus, patriarch of Alexandria, and other Arian bishops in a synod: Write, says he, and by your authority declare, that what they have thus unjustly done when I was absent, and never refusing to appear, is void. Subject them to the censure of the church, who have been thus presumptuous. And since I am innocent, having nothing proved against me, and sound guilty of no crime, command that I

be again restored to my see.

St. Jerom. Ep. 57, to pope Damasus, I demand a protection of this your sheep: 1 speak to the successor of the fisherman, to the disciple of the cross I follow no other leader but Christ, and am in communion with your holinels, that is, with the chair of Peter. Upon that rock I know the church is built. Whoever eats the Lamb out of this house is profane. Whoever is not in the ark of Noah, shall perish in the flood. I know not Vitalis, I reject Meletius, I do not own Paulinus; whoever does not gather with you, fcatters; that is, he that is not of Christ, is antichrist's. And while these three unhappy factions in the East endeavoured each to gain him to their party, be cries out to them, Signis Cathedra Petri jungitur, meus est : Let me know which of you holds communion with the chair of Peter, and him I shall ac-

knowledge for mine. Ep. 58.

St Augustin cont. part. Donat. Reckon up the priests even in the chair of Peter, and in that lift of fathers, fee the order of fucceffion. That is the rock, against which the gates of hell shall never prevail. And Ep. 92, to pope Innocent, in the name of the council of Milevi in Africa. Since it has pleafed God, by his special grace, to seat you in the chair apostolic, and so to qualify you in these our times, that it would be a crime in us not to lay before you what is for the church's interest. We do beseech you to use your care of pastor, in looking after the infirm members of Christ. For a new herefy is lately broached, but we hope by the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ, who helps you in the discharge of your duty, and hears your prayers, that the abettors of this pernicious doctrine will submit to the authority of your holiness, which authority is derived to you by the authority of the holy feripture. and and

The council of Ephesus owns this authority in the hishop of Rome, whilst the fathers there assembled say they pronounce fentence against Nestorius, obliged by the holy canons, and the epistle of their holy father Celestin, bishop of

Rome. Act. 1. And Act. 2, He is stiled in full affembly, their holy head, the successor of Peter, who was the head of the apostles, and foundation of the catholic church.

Likewise the council of Chalcedon, AA. 1. In as much as the accusation against Dioscorus was, that having no authority to judge, he presumed and durst convocate a synod, without the authority of the see apostolic, which was ever unlawful, and without precedent: Quod nunquam licuit, nunquam factum est. And his crime is thus declared by the council to pope Leo: That his sury spared not him to whom the care of the vineyard was committed by Christ, that is, your Holiness. Insuper & contra ipsum, cui Vineae custodia a Salvatore commissa est extendit insaniam, id est, contra tuam quoq; apostolicam sanctitatem.

This may suffice, out of much more that might be added, to shew what was the sense of the primitive church, as to this question. And now if this whole matter be duly considered, First, As to the reasons above mentioned, which are not mine, but borrowed from learned men, not of our communion. 2dly, As to these testimonies of antiquity, shewing applications made to the apostolic see, in causes ecclesiastical, from Constantinople, from Antioch, from Alexandria, from

Africa, and the power of deciding them, with the care of the whole flock, acknowledged both by the most eminent prelates and ancient councils; mult it not be confessed that the council of Florence had sufficient grounds to declare, that the fee apoftolic and Roman bishop has the primacy over the whole world; that he is the successor of St Peter, prince of the apostles, true vicar of Christ, head of the whole church, the father and director of all Christians; and that there was given to him, in bleffed Peter, by our Lord Jesus Christ, a full power of feeding, ruling, and governing the universal church, according to the acts of general councils and the holy canons.

And if this definition (which is only of faith in this matter) be confidered alone, abstracted from school opinions, which are not of faith, as, that the pope is infallible in himself; that he is above a general council; that he has an indirect authority over the temporal power of princes: If it be considered farther, as Grotius observes, how ready the remedies are in France and Spain, to retain the pope from invading the rights either of the kings or bishops: Moreover, that the king of Great Britain, as he says, enjoys no power concerning things and perfons ecclesiastical, which the king of Sicily

has not also, Judgm of Rel. If, I say, what is required as a term of communion was duly considered, separate from opinions and scandals, I cannot but think it might be consented to by all moderate men, as a doctrine grounded on scripture, conformable to the ancient canons, and necessary for the beauty and order of the universal church.

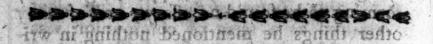
O God, do thou inspire all Christians with the desire of peace; grant they may weigh all things with a spirit above the influence of prejudice, passion, or interest; these are no where tolerated, but with injustice; how desperate then must the cause of truth be, where these have the management? Desiver all Christians from these evils, and may they judge of truth with the indifference that ought to be on the bench.

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On this day the subject of our discourse shall be of tradition; of which our profession of faith has these words: Apostolicas & ecclesiasticas traditiones sirmissime admitto & amplector. I stedsastly admit and embrace apostolical and ecclesiastical traditions.

By apostolical traditions are meant such doctrines and ordinances, as were delivered by the apostles, and without being committed to writing, were received by the church, and by its continual belief or practice, have been conveyed through all ages down to us. That there were doctrines delivered by the apostles without writing; and likewise, that fuch doctrines were stedfastly to be admitted and embraced by the faithful, is the express word of scripture: Therefore, brethren, stand fast, and hold the traditions which ye have been taught, whether by word or our epiftle, 2 Thef. ii. 15. The things that thou haft heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithfu! men, who shall be able to teach others also, 2 Tim. ii. 2. St Paul wrote many

things to the Corinthians, appointing and reforming as he found necessary; and of many other things he mentioned nothing in writing, but adjourned the speaking to them, till he should come amongst them: And the rest I will set in order when I come, 1 Cor. xi. So likewise St John; baving many things to write to you, I would not write with paper and ink; but I trust to come to you, and speak face to face, that our joy may be full, 2 John 12. I had many things to write; but I will not with ink and pen write to thee; But I trust I shall shortly see thee, and we shall speak face to face; 3- John 13. In which words are diffinguished two ways of delivering the facred truth; one by writing, the other by word of mouth; and the command of the apostle is, that the faithful hold fast the doctrine, whether it be delivered one way or the other. It is matter of fact, then, recorded in scripture, that the apostles taught fome things without writing; and the will of God is manifest in scripture, that what was thus taught by the apostles, was to be believed and held fast by the faithful, as well as that which they left in writing. If it was the will of God that the unwritten word should be held fast, then it was the will of God, that it should be retained by the pastors of the church and the faithful, and P iv

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taught to following generations; for so the apost le expressly requires of Timothy; That thou hast heard of me, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also. Then the church, which has held fast this unwritten word, and taught it, and delivered it down to following generations, has in this done according to the express will of God, and to his positive command recorded in scripture: And those, who refusing to receive what has been thus taught and delivered, have endeavoured to stifle it, have, in so doing, acted contrary to the will of God, and to the express command of the written word.

That this exposition may be vindicated from the imputation of novelty, let us appeal to the fathers of the primitive church, and hear their judgment upon the point. St Irenaus, 1. 3. adv. Har. c. 8, No one ought to learch for the truth among others, which it is easy to receive from the church; the apostles having abundantly stored up in her, as in a rich treasury, all things that are of truth; So that every one, that will, may from her receive the water of life. For she is the entrance into life, and all others are thieves and robbers; wherefore these indeed are to be avoided; but those things which are of the church, we are to embrace

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with the greatest diligence, and lay hold of the tradition of truth.—What if the apostles had left us no scripture; ought we not to sollow the order of tradition, which they delivered to those to whom they committed the care of the churches?

Origen in Praf 1. 1. Peri. Because there are many, who perfuade themselves they believe aright concerning Christ, and some of them teach differently from those that went before us; yet the doctrine of the church delivered down by the order of fuccession from the apostles, and to this present remaining in the churches, is preserved: That truth alone is to be believed, which in nothing difagrees from ecclefialtical tradition. And tract. 29. in Mat He says of heretics expounding the scripture; we are not to give credit to them, nor forfake the first and ecclefiaftical tradition, nor believe otherwise, than as the churches of God have fuccessively delivered down to us.

St Basil 1. de Sp. S. c. 27. Amongst the doctrines and ordinances, which are preached in the church, some we have from the written word, and others we have received from the tradition of the apostles, in a mystery, that is, in secret; both which equally conduce to piety. Nor will any deny this, that has experienced never so little the eccle-

fiastical rights. For if we once begin to throw by, as inconsiderable, such practices, as are not delivered in writing, our imprudence will highly prejudice the Gospel, or rather reduce the very preaching of faith to nothing but a mere name. Then having numbered up many observances of the church, which are not in scripture, be adds, c. 22. We have many other mysteries, acknowledged authentic, without any thing of writing to support them: For I doubt not but it is conformable to the doctrine of the apostles, to embrace traditions not written.

St Gregory Nyf. 1. 3 cont. Eunom. Let it be known, that it is a sufficient proof of our doctrine, that we have received it by tradition from our ancestors; it having been left us as a kind of an inheritance by the apostles, and conveyed down to us by a continued succession of the faithful in all ages.

St Epiphanius Hær. 61. It is necessary to admit of tradition; for all things cannot be found in scripture. And therefore the holy apostles delivered some things in writing, and some by tradition. Which is affirmed by St Paul, where he says, As I have delivered to you. And in another place, So I teach, and so I have delivered in the churches.

teach, and so I have delivered in the churches. St Augustin, 1. 4. de Bapt. What is observed by the whole church, never decreed

in councils, but always maintained, is justly believed to have been instituted by the apostles. And 1. 5. The apostles left no command touching this matter, but that practice, which was opposed against Cyprian, is to be believed to have been derived from their tradition. As there are many things observed throughout the whole church, and therefore justly looked on as commanded by the apostles, though they are no where found in writing. And ep. 118. ad Jan. But those things which we and the whole world observe, without any authority of writing, but only tradition, it is to be understood, were commended and appointed to be retained either by the apostles or general councils, whose authority is very great in the church.

St Chrysostom Ho. 4. in ep. 2. ad Thes. Upon these words of the apostle, Hold fast the traditions which you have learned, says, Hence it is manifest, that the apostles have not delivered all in their epistles, but many things also without writing, which are likewise to be believed. Let us therefore esteem the tradition of the church worthy of credit; it is a tradition; enquire no farther.

This is the general language of the fathers upon this subject, in which they are so express, as occasion offers, that none, who

have a due veneration for their antiquity, piety, and learning, can bring this matter into quettion. And hence, while this profellion of our faith, of holding fast apostolic and ecclefiaftical traditions, is to conformable to the scripture, and to the primitive church; I cannot think this can be any matter of difference with those who appeal to both these as the best rule of their faith. Neither can I apprehend how any can except against it, fince there is no congregation of Christians whatever, but what in fact owns it, both in faith and discipline, by believing and observing many things, which have no other authority but of tradition. All believe the bible to be the word of God, and fuch particular books to be canonical; and what authority have they at this time for this belief but only tradition; because they have been so received down to us by the church? The creed is received, as framed by the apostles, and an authentic fymbol of faith: Whence have we this, but by tradition, because it has been so delivered? The Sunday is generally observed, and kept holy, though the commandments positively require the fanctification of the Saturday: Whence is the authority of this change; for annulling the determination of the divine law, but from tradition? All generally

nerally believe it lawful to eat blood and strangled meats; though it be expressly forbidden by the apostles, Acts xv. 20. Whence have we this, but from tradition? The confubstantiality of the Son with the Father, and the procession of the Holy Ghost from Father and Son, is generally believed, and has place in our creeds; and whence have we this positive determination, but from tradition? As to all forms of public or private prayer; the particular manner, and ceremonies and prayers, in administering the Sacraments, in ordination and burials, in appointing fasts and holidays, in the greatest part of church discipline, in the division of dioceles and parishes, in baptifing infants, in churchmen not being of fome handicraft trade, in the distinction of their habit; in giving the Sacrament in the church, fasting, and kneeling, with infinite other particulars; what positive authority is there for these befides tradition? Take away this, and let the whole matter be duly weighed, and I question not, but, as St Basil observes, the preaching of faith will be reduced to a mere named instruction in Qa-5. . dono in the

But now, while I plead for tradition, I do not in this pretend to justify all traditions; neither does the church require our approbation of them. Hence, as to all such tra-

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ditions, like those of the pharisees, which are either repugnant to the law of God, or frivolous and unprofitable to piety and true worship, or are nothing but vain and superstitious observations, and therefore may be called the traditions of men, the church no where recommends, but requires all to look opon them with the contempt they deserve. Our submission is demanded to none but apostolical and ecclesiastical traditions, such as have been received from the apostles, or have been the ordinances of the church; and of what authority these ought to be, the scripture and fathers teach to positively, in requiring obedience and submission, that the contempt of them cannot be separated from the contempt of God, who has put them over us.

But how can it be known what traditions are apollolical? The fathers above-cited give some directions for this; which being summed up by Grotius, I will repeat his words: First, It is a just presumption those things were delivered from the apostles, which are every where found in the churches, and whereof any other original does not

appear.

adly, If there be some pious witnesses, wile, and of great authority in the church, who assire a thing, as delivered from the apostles, we have now so great a proof, as is

in this matter fufficient, nor less than that by which we discern the apostolical writings from those that are not apostolical. What they found in the church, they held; what they learned, they taught; what they received from their fathers, they delivered to their children, saith St Augustin. A mathe-matical certitude is not required in all things. If one be pertinacious, he will as eafily find escapes against the book, as against the tra-But it became the divine providence to take care, that neither the books in matters of moment, nor the tradition should be adulterated; and that it has performed. Why then did not the apostles write what they had delivered? Because they writ as occasion was offered, and as the time required not a system of doctrine and government. What things pertained to the regiment and the peace of the churches, were indeed written in great letters, in the conspicious use of those churches, which were founded by the apostles, Judgm. of Rel.

This is agreeable to what the ancient fathers taught, and must be so far acknowledged even by the most precise retrenchers; as to confess, that many things of those which they yet retain and practice, have no other authority for being apostolical than this. No religion can subsist that wholly

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lays by tradition; and how then can it be reasonable to declaim against tradition, and yet to retain things that have no other title? The only thing I propose is, That those particulars be examined, which have been laid by as the inventions of men, by modern congregations, and be compared with what they yet retain; and that they would equally approve what has equal authority to support it. And if they find in us (as they may) a defire of laying all that which has not as good authority for it, as the things which they retain as most warrantable, I do not see but there may be an accommodation of this point. O God, inspire all Christians with this good disposition, that they may receive all those things which carry thy authority with them. The apostles had thy authority for what they taught and delivered; the church has thy authority for delivering the same, and likewife for governing the flock, and judging what is convenient in the administration of church government, discipline, or public worship. If then we receive what is thus delivered, we obey thy ordinance; and obstinacy here is disobedience to thee, and the ready way to overthrow the best institutions, even thy own, and to let in confusion, where show halt commanded unity and peace. of the third sooils and or or

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HO MISSON St LAWRENCE.

N this day the subject of our discourse shall be, of praying for the souls of the faithful departed, and of purgatory! To prepare for this, I must declare what our church teaches. First, That all fuch as keep the commandments, and die fo in the liate of grace, as to be free from the guilt of fin, and from all punishment due to it, at their departure out of this life, go immediately to heaven. 2dly, That fuch as live wickedly, and die without repentance, at their departure go forthwith to hell. And here the question comes, Whether it can be reasonably apprehended that these two sorts include all mankind; that all are either fo very good, as to go immediately to heaven; or fo very wicked, as to be cast into hell?

There seems reason enough to sear there are but sew of the sormer sort; that is, so very perfect as to be forthwith translated from this vale of misery, to the possession of God: And as for all those who come not up to this perfection, are they all so very

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wicked? We hope, that amongst Christians there are many of another degree, who, though not so very good and perfect as to be immediately received into bliss, are not however to very wicked, as to be eternally banished from the fight of God, and damned for ever. For what shall we say of all those, who carefully avoiding all grievous sins, as being truly desirous to save their souls, are yet subject to many imperfections; as to some neglect of their prayers, some light and fudden passions of impatience, anger, or other evils of inadvertency, which may be termed rather the consequences of a natural weakness, than wilful offences? What shall we say of this rank of Christians, if they die without a just repentance, as it often happens to many, who are taken off fuddenly, or by fuch distempers, which seizing the head, deprive them of all means of making their peace with God? It feems not confistent with the mercy of God, for such tres-passes of weakness or inadvertency found in his children, to cast them out of his fight for ever; and therefore hell can have no claim in them: And yet they are not in a state of going immediately to heaven, because dying under the guilt of these offences, though light, their fouls are fo far polluted; and the fcripture declares the will of God in

this case, that nothing that is polluted or desiled can enter into heaven: There shall is no wife enter into it any thing that is desiled, Rev. xxi. 27. Therefore they must be deposited for a time in some third place, till by suffering they satisfy the justice of God, and thus be purished from the guilt of those imperfections in which they departed this life,

and fo to be prepared for heaven.

Thus we divide Christians into three ranks: First, The very good. 2dly, The very wicked: 3dly, A middle fort, which are neither so very good, and yet not wicked; and this grounded upon scripture; which likewise gives farther authority to that which is most called in question; by shewing some fins to be forgiven in the life to come; which cannot be understood of the very good, who go immediately to heaven, because that is no place for forgiveness or redemption, and consequently it must be understood of a third state.

That there are some sins forgiven in the life to come, is shewn, First, in 2 Macch. xii. 43, where Judas Macchabeus sends money to Jerusalem, that a sacrifice may be offered for the sins of those that were dead; Offerri pro peccatis mortuorum sacrificium: And where it is declared to be a holy and pious thought to pray for the dead, that

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they may be delivered from their fins. Now, though these books are not received as canonical by all; yet fince their authority was made use of in the primitive church, as by Origen, St Cyprian, Eusebius Casariensis, St Gregory, Naziansen, St Ambrose: Since they were received by the African, by the Eastern and Western church; since St Ferome fays they were read by the church, and that the church read nothing but what was for the edification of the people; it cannot be reafonably imagined that there was any thing in thefe-books contrary to piety and to the faith of the church; and therefore we may conclude, that this doctrine was what was then believed

peaketh against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, neither in the world to come. In which words Christ supposes there are some sins forgiven in the next life, though those against the Holy Ghost shall not: And so St Augustin expounds this place of the Gospel, de Civ. Deid. xxi. c. 13, 24. And it cannot be imagined that so great a prelate would fasten a sense upon Christ's words, contrary to faith, piety, and the belief of the church.

3dly, In 1 Cor. iii, 15. If any man's work shall burn, he shall suffer loss: But he

Which words, though difficult, and capable of another continuction, yet may be understood as hinting a third place, where there is falvation, yet so as by fire. And to St Augustin seems to expound them, in Ps. xxxvii. where he says, If they build gold, silver, precious stones, they would be out of danger of both fires; not only of that eternal, which shall be the everlasting torment of the wicked, but likewise of the fire which shall purify those who shall be saved by fire.

Hitherto scripture; now let the fathers speak what was the doctrine and practice of the primitive church, and whether agreeable to this explication of holy writ, and to

the reason above given.

Tertullian 1. de Monog. c. 10, speaking of the obligation of a christian widow, says, She prays likewise for her husband's soul, and begs in the mean time refreshment for him, and that he may have part in the first resurrection; and makes oblations on the anniversary days of his departure.

St Cyril of Jerusalem Cat. Myst. 5. Then, says be, we pray for our holy fathers and bishops deceased: And Lastly, We pray for all such as have died amongst us; believing that those souls find very great help for

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whom the prayer is offered of that holy and awful facrifice, which lies upon the altar.—After the same manner we also offer up prayers for the dead, though sinners; by making an oblation of Christ, who died for our fins, that so we may obtain mercy both for ourselves and them, of him who is most merciful.

St Gregory Nyffen. Orat. de Mortuis, where he fays, That such as die, having been cleansed from their sins, either in this life, by prayers and the practice of virtue; or after death having been expiated in the surnace of purging sire, are received into ever-

lasting bliss.

St Basil in c. 9, Isa. If we have disclosed, says he, our sin in confession, the growing weed is by this means so withered and dry, that it will be easily consumed by the pur-

ging fire.

St Gregory Naz. Orat. 39, in St Lumina, where having mentioned two expiations in this life, viz. Baptism and penance; he mentions likewise the third in the life to come. In the next life, says he, they may perhaps come to be baptised by fire, which is the last baptism; not only more painful, but also more lasting; which devours the gross matter like hay, and consumes the frailty of all fin.

St Epiphanius Har. 75. The prayers, fays be, which we offer for the dead, are advan-

tageous to them, though they are not able to cancel all fins. We mention both the just and finners; the latter, that we may ob-

tain mercy for them.

St Chrysostom, Hom. 4t, in Ep. t, ad Cor. If a finner has departed this life, we mult relieve him as much as possible, not by weeping, but by praying for him, giving alms, and making oblations for his foul. For these things are not instituted in vain, and it is not an idle commemoration we make in the facred mysteries of fuch as are dead,—but that they may thereby receive fome confolation.—Let us therefore, with all cheerfulness, affift those that are dead, and pray for them :- We are all but one body, though some members are more noble than others: It is possible we may obtain pardon for them, in order to a full discharge, by our prayers and oblations.—Why therefore do you grieve, fince to the party deceafed you may bring fo great relief? And Hom. 21, upon the Acts, It is not in vain that oblations are made for the dead; we do not in vain pray and give alms for them. All this is the ordinance of the Holy Ghost, who danigns we should help one another. For see, he will be benefited by you, and you by him, being perfuaded for his fake to fome charitable work; where you are the occato which we offer for the deads are of

fion to him of his falvation, and he to you of your charity; and you need not doubt

but it will be of good effect, the one doidw

St Jerome, Ep. 26, ad Pammach, on the neath of his wife. Other husbands dress their wives tombs with flowers;—but our friend Pammachius pays no other duty to the holy ashes and venerable bones, than by giving alms, cherishing them by this sweet odour; because he knows it is written, As water extinguishes the fire, so alms blot out sin.

St Augustin, 1. 9, Conf. c. 13, Prays thus for his mother deceased: I know, she dealt mercifully, and from her heart forgave to her debtors their trespasses; do thou likewife remit her debts to her, if the has also contracted some in those many years she lived after baptism: Forgive them, O Lord, forgive them, I befeech thee. And de cura pro mort. c, 1, In the books of Macchabees we read, that facrifice was offered for the dead. But if there were no fuch thing in the Old Scripture, yet the authority of the whole church, which is evident in this practice, is of no small weight: Where among the prayers faid by the priest at the altar of God, the recommendation of the dead is recited in its place. Again, Serm. 32, de verb. ap. A pompous funeral is no advantage to the dead—but as for the pravers of the holy church, the propinatory facrifice and alms, which are offered for their fouls, no doubt but they are thereby aided, fo as to be treated with greater mercy than their fins deferved. For this, which has been delivered by the fathers, the whole church observes (when at the facrifice itself, the dead are in their place commemorated) to pray for all fuch as are departed in the communion of the body and blood of Christ, and that it be remembered that the facrifice is likewife offered for them.-It is beyond all question these things are beneficial to the dead; but only to fuch who fo lived, as to be capable of receiving help from these things after their death.

Thus speaks antiquity; and now, besides the evidence of a general practice of praying for the dead, does it not seem clear, that these fathers supposed a third state of souls after this life, distinct from that of heaven and hell? For while in their prayers for the deceased, they pray for help, relief, comfort, mercy, and pardon, they certainly suppose souls to be in a state where they both want all this assistance, and are capable of receiving it. I his cannot be in heaven, where there is no want of relief or pardon; nor in hell, because though there be want of all, there is no possibility of receiving it.

That this state of fouls can be in no degree of glory, and confequently not in heaven, feems necessarily to be owned; not only because heaven cannot receive any thing fo far defiled with fin, as to stand in need of pardon, or of being discharged of its guilt, as the fathers express it; but likewife because they suppose the souls for which they pray to be in a suffering state. So St Augustin expressly, de civit. Dei 1. 21, c. 24, where discoursing of such as die under the guilt of light fins, he fays, It is certain that fuch being purged by temporal pains, (which they suffer before the day of judgment) when they receive their bodies, Shall not be condemned to eternal torments. In which words this father owns a state of christian souls, dying with the guilt of lighter fins, and fuffering temporal pain for them in the next life; yet so, as at the last day not to be cast off with the reprobate; which is a state very different from hell, and every degree of heaven; fince in the one of these there is no fuffering, and in the other, no releafe. These temporal pains he mentions again, ib. c. 13. Some, says he, suffer temporal punishment in this life only; others, after their death; others, both in this life, and likewife in the next; but still before that last and terrible judgment. Now these temporal pains being wholly inconsistent with every degree of bliss, this cannot be heaven, nor yet in hell, where the punishment is not temporal, but eternal; it necessarily implies a third state, in which there is a suffering for sin, but such as shall have an end.

Now this being the doctrine of the church, and founded both on scripture and the pract tice of the universal and primitive church, I cannot think but all those who desire to regulate their faith by scripture and the primitive church may eafily be reconciled to this point, and not let it have any part in keeping up a division, and breaking the peace of the church. For though the word purgatory has not the authority of scripture; vet fince the church does no more than by it express what has all the authority that can be required, there ought to be no more exception against the term, than against that of Trinity or Consubstantial, which all generally make use of to express their belief, though not found in scripture. If the doctrine be well grounded, why should we quarrel about terms? This does not become the followers of the Gospel. Grant peace, O God, in our days, and remove the fcandal of our divisions. will before that the and reverble sudgittens

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Assumption of the B. Virgin.

This day we will speak of some devotions to the B. V. Mary, and see what are the exceptions against them, and what the abuses in them. And of all these, whatever they be, we lay down this as a general ground for coming to a good understanding, that none of them, however approved, are enjoined by the church, and they are so far from being made a term of communion, that all the members of it are at full liberty of using them, if they think fit, and likewise of letting them alone.

Now in particular, as to the rolary or beads, it is certain they are approved, and may be serviceable to piety, if used according to the direction of those books which prescribe the method; by leading the mind through all the mysteries of man's redemption, and giving it a frequent opportunity of a grateful acknowledment of all that God has done for us. They may in particular be very helpful to such as cannot read, or are any ways disabled from the use of a

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tio th book; fince by thefe a person may at any time employ half an hour in prayer, without any burthen of memory, who otherwise would be at a loss in spending five minutes. This is many times a help even to the learned, who, having their minds tired with books, or being defirous to walk, have in these a method of making addresses to God; but a much greater help to the ignorant, in being thus provided of a means of being as constant, and spending as much time in prayer as those who have the best choice of books. And what this advantage is, those may eafily imagine who know how dull and barren are the minds of the unlearned, and how foon they are at a fland, when they even intend to turn their hearts to God.

This contrivance must be acknowledged considerable; but then, when the thing is enquired into, and it appears, that in using the beads, persons pray ten times more to the Virgin Mary, than to God, this over-throws all again, and makes the advantage of such prayers to be worse than not praying at all. This description of the beads, I confess, has no encouragement in it, as far as it seems to infinuate a greater application, and more confidence in the B. Virgin than in God; but this is not a true account.

First, Because when I defire the B. Vir-

gin to pray to God for me, I in this acknowledge, that all is in the hands of God, that all must come from him, that he is the fountain of all good; and asking the Virgin Mary to pray to him for me, is only owning her a creature, defiring her to be petitioner with me, and confequently acknowledging, that God's gifts are not in her's, but his own hands: As often then as I repeat, Holy Mary pray for me, it cannot be truly faid that I pray to the Virgin Mary, and not to God; for certainly, I pray more to God than to her. For fee, when I defire a friend, or any just man on earth, to pray for me, is it not with hopes that God will hear him, and grant what: I want? Is not my hope in God, my expectation from God, my defire on God? And is not my petition made to God, while I defire my friend to pray for me? Or can it, with truth, be faid, that my defires and request are more directed to him than to God; or that I pray to him, and not to God? The case is here plain, that as often as I defire another to pray for me, so often do I express my dependence on God, and so often, in effect, do I pray to him. It is the fame, when I defire the same of the Blessed Virgin ; for all that I ask of her, is to be petitioner to God for me; and here my prayer is as much di-

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rected to God as my petition is to the king, when I defire another to deliver it to him, and to make an interest for me. Although therefore I should say, a thousand times together, Holy Mary, pray for me, it is not true that I pray more to the Virgin Mary than to God, because every time I ask it, I pray to God, and expect the grant of my

petition from him. It gotto ak a sonsol owe

2dly, Because, when I defire the Virgin Mary to pray for me, it is not because I have a greater confidence in her than in God; no, God forbid; this is what I abhor with all my foul, it is blafphemy itself; but because I have a greater considence in her prayers than in my own. I know myfelf to be an unhappy finner, and this fense of my unworthiness makes me fear, lest my petition be rejected; here is a distrust of myfelf, and where is the fault of this, if it be the effect of humility, and not of despair? If then, as, by God's order, Job's friends were commanded to defire Job to pray for them, because he was just, and more acceptable to God than they, fo I folicit those to pray for me, who are just, and more acceptable in God's fight than myfelf, I do in this no way give them a preference to God, but only to myfelf, hoping that their prayer will more prevail than my own. And now,

if ten times together I repeat, Holy Mary, pray for me, there can be no more inferred from hence, but that I fo often express a kind of distrust of myself, and that I think her prayers more likely to be heard than my own. And what more in this, than in the Ifraelites desiring Moses or Samuel to pray for them, because they hoped God would be favourable to their requests, as

being more just than themselves?

But what means the fo frequent repetition of the same prayer? If the prayer be good, where can be the harm of repeating it? Can persons in distress be reproved for often calling for help? Perseverance and importunity in prayer, and praying always, are recommended in scripture; and can it be imagined, that God will not have regard to fuch perseverance, except it has variety to recommend it? This feems a thought beneath the infinite goodness of God, who prescribing us to pray, has no where declared, that except we have great change of prayers, he will not hear us. Variety may be some help to us, in making us more attentive to what we fay; but, as to God, I cannot apprehend upon what head, variety will more engage him to our assistance, and why the Lord's prayer, or even those three words, Thy will be done, repeated for our

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whole life, may not be as acceptable as any collection of the greatest variety whatever. If repetition be nothing but a formality or custom, I make no defence for it; but if it be the expression of an humble and contrite heart, or of a foul importuning heaven for relief, I think there can be no exception against it, but by absurdly fixing on God the weakness of man, and making him subject to nauseate, where there is not change or interruption of time to prevent it. If a foul was for fix hours together under that one thought of defiring mercy, would this take off the value of his prayer? And would it after the case, if that one thought were so often expressed and repeated in words? This has too much of shaping God to our own imagination, and therefore I leave it.

But the confraternities under the protection of the B. Virgin, are not to be so passed by, in which Christians list and oblige themselves to her service, and are taught to have so great a considence in her, as not to fear damnation, whatever their lives be, so they be but constant in their devotion to her. The confraternities here hinted at are most of them approved, and being a voluntary engagement of pious persons in frequenting the Sacraments, in prayer and fasting, and the mutual assistance of one ano-

ther, can deserve no censure. But if there be any fuch abuses as now mentioned in them, I know no arricle of my faith that obliges me to defend them; but my faith teaches me to condemn them. For does not the church teach me from the Gospel to forfake my evil ways, to deny myfelf, to crucify the flesh with its lusts, if I defire mercy, and expect pardon of fin? If then any are found, that let up for an easier way, in giving affurance of falvation, upon the ceremony of what they wear, or the formality of some prayers, without quitting their criminal life, do not these set up another Gospel against Christ's? And can there be any difficulty in pronouncing, that, however, in these circumstances, they desire the B. Virgin to pray for them, the has an abhorrence of all their devotions? Since it is impossible, they who live in the displeasure of God by their wickedness, should be acceptable to the faints, who cannot be honoured, where God is dishonoured: Thus it is positively declared in the Catechism set forth by the three French bishops, for the use of their dioceses, Part. 6. Act. 2. Lec. 8. And those histories are censured as false, which give occasion to these abuses, by reprefenting the B. Virgin more compassionate than her Son, and that the has reprieved some of her devotes, whom he would have condemned for their wickedness.

Hence the same bishops, ib. conclude, that it is necessary for every one to keep firm to the faith of the Catholic church, which teaching, that it is pious and profitable to see the B. Virgin and other Saints to pray for us, likewife teaches that it is abfolutely necessary to place our confidence in Jesus Christ; because, as the scripture declares, there is no falvation but through him, and no other name under heaven, by which we can be faved, but his alone. And hence, that our principal devotion ought to be to Jesus Christ; who having delivered himself to death for our fins, continues in heaven to be our perpetual advocate to the Father. Finally, fince Jefus Christ has declared, that however devout we are to him, in calling him, Lord, Lord, we cannot enter into heaven, if we do not the will of his Father; we ought to entertain no hopes of falvation, whatever our devotion be to the B. Virgin and the Saints, if we do not repent of our fins, as God has ordained, and quit all our evil ways, to live fuch true Christians as the Gospel requires.

And may not this now help to remove fome occasion of our division, since however we are taught to ask the blessed Virgin to pray

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for us, and because of her great advantage of holiness and glory above us sinners, to place more considence in her prayers than our own; yet however, our considence of salvation ought to be in Jesus Christ, and his mediation, without setting any in competition, or to interfere with him? And as for all abuses, either of ignorance or design, we are as much at liberty in renouncing and condemning them, as those who are not in the communion of the church, and therefore, without reason, make these the plea for their separation.

Wherefore I appeal to thee, O God, who knowest, that however we desire our fellow-members on earth and in heaven to pray for us, it is only to ask such charitable help of them, as the living members of the same body are capable, through thy mercy, to give to one another; but for our hope and considence of salvation, it is only in the promises of thy fatherly goodness, and the merits of thy only Son. And upon the truth of this profession, I beseech thee to remove all just and unjust scandals, which are made the occasions of our unhappy di-

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AUGUST XXIV.

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bnA time N this festival the subject of our difcourse shall be of holy relicks. And of these the church teaches no more, but that they are to be had in veneration. And if there be a veneration due to them, this declaration of the church must then be acknowledged, as only demanding justice. That a veneration is due to them, there are these reasons; First, Because what is holy, or has any eminent relation to God or his service. &c. challenges a holy respect from us. And are not the relicks of God's Saints holy, which have been confecrated to God. and are a part of those sacrifices which have been offered to him by martyrdom, or the fire of divine love, by which they have been fignalized in his fervice? Have not they an eminent relation to him, by that fingular grace, by which the fervants of God were diftinguished from the children of the world; and though at present left upon earth, are to be again parts of those bodies, which are to be glorified for ever? And what God VOL. VII.

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himself is thus pleased to honour, are not we to think worthy of our respect? Again, are not they particularly helpful in the fervice of God, while they preach to me the goodness of my God to his servants, and thus are an encouragement both to praise and hope in him; while they reproach me with my own floth and tepidity, and teach me to give my life for Christ; while they are fo many memorials of God's mercies to poor dust and alhes, and to finful clay, in not only delivering them from corruption, but railing them to be companions with the angels, and partakers in their blifs? Is not this serviceable to eternity, and does not this deserve our respect? We see in scripture with what veneration God commanded the vessel of manna, and Aaron's rod, to be reposited in the ark, and always kept in the holy of holies: And why? Was it not that they might be as monuments of God's power and mercy to the Ifraelites? And was there not some respect due to these things, which God had chosen for the instruments of his infinite goodness to that people? On this same account, then, do not the holy remains of God's fervants claim our respect, while to us they are the monuments of his lingular grace, teach us how much we ought to hope in him, who has been fo mer-

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ciful to others, as frail as ourselves, and daily excite us with the memory of his goodness, to bless his name? Again, since we find that God has often

made the relicks of his fervants to be the instruments of his goodness to us, as in raising the dead man to life, by touching the prophet Elisha's bones, 2 or 4 Kin. xiii. 21: In curing diseases, and calting out devils by handkerchiefs and aprons, which had touched St Paul's body, Acts xix. 12: In wonders wrought by the shadow of St Peter. Acts v. 15: Have not we hence sufficient motives for diftinguishing fuch relicks, by a particular efteem for them? To contemn fuch things thus fignalized by the power of heaven, would be ingratitude to him who has made them the inftruments of his mercy to us; and to have them in veneration, is no more than what answers the value he. has fet upon them.

This is all that the church requires in this point, only fuch a veneration as is due to holy things, and it being grounded on fcripture and reason, we must now see whether it be not a doctrine and practice agreeable to the primitive church, to which all appeal, while they fay, they are that church.

Eufebius. 1. 7. Hist. Ecc. c. 10. The faithful of the church of Jerusalem, sollow-

ing the example of their ancestors, shew great reverence to the chair of St James, who was instituted bishop of Jerufalem, by Christ and his apostles. And in this they plainly declare, how great a veneration and honour the primitive Christians had for holy men, for their love of God, and how much they are now respected by the Christians of

our days is count tail should on alug St Gregory Nyffen. Orat. upon St Theadore, Martyr. Whoever beholds these excellent pictures of the martyrs' combat, is ferthwith defirous of approaching to the fepulchre of the martyr, not doubting, but the touching this will be a fanctification and bleffing to him. And if any one be permitted to take of the dust which lies about the monument, it is looked on as a great fayour; and this earth is laid up, and kept as a thing of great value. But to touch the relicks, whenever this happiness is granted, is fo defirable a thing, fo much to be wished for, that they only can truly explicate it, who have experienced it in the enjoyment of their defires. For thefe, as if they faw the body fresh and living, kiss it, and lay it to their eyes, their mouth, their ears, and to all their senses. And then, as if the martyr were alive and present, they beseech him to make intercession for them. 100 1

St Gregory Nazianzen, Orat. 3, thus speaks to Julian the apostate: Had you no respect for those victims slain for Christ, John, Peter, Paul, James---who are highly honoured, and have solemn days appointed in their memory; who east out devils, and cure diseases; whose apparitions and admonitions, nay, whose very bodies can do the same as their souls, to those that touch them or honour them; the very drops of whose blood, and small marks of whose martyrdom, can do the same with their bodies. And these do you not honour, but contemn?

Theodoret, Ser. cont. Gras. The fouls of the martyrs are entertained in heaven. Their divided bodies retain their power entire; those poor, little, and almost undiscernable relicks, having the same virtue as the whole martyr. For it is the grace annexed to them, which distributes those blessings, and shares its liberality in proportion to their

faith that come to them and a stantish of

St Jerome, Ep. 53. We are so far from worshipping or adoring the relicks of martyrs, that we do not do it, to the sun and moon, to angels or archangels, cherubins or seraphims, or any other thing, either in this world, or in that to come; lest by so doing, we should serve some creature instead of our Creator. We honour indeed the re-

licks of martyrs, that to we may adore him, whose martyrs they are. We shew an honour to the servants, that the honour given them may redound to their Lord, who has said, He that receives you receives me

St Ambrofe, Serm. 14. This is the glory of the holy martyrs, that though their affres are spread through the whole world, yet the virtue is not diminished, but every where entire. I honour, therefore, in the flesh of the martyr, the wounds he received for the fake of Christ. I honour the memory of him, yet living in the continuance of his virtue. I honour his ashes, made sacred by his confession of Christ. I honour in his allies the feeds of eternity. I honour his body, which has shewed me how to love my God, and taught me not to fear to die for my Lord. And why should not the faithful honour that body, for which the very devils have a respect? Which they have caufed to be tormented, but is now honoured in his fepulchre. I honour that body which Christ has honoured with martyrdom, which shall reign with Christ in fuch things are carried about for nevert

St Augustin, Serm. 92 de divers. speaks thus of the relicks of St Stephen: A little dust has called together so great a multitude. The ashes lie hid, but the benefits

how great things God has referved for us in the state of bliss, who makes the dust of those that are dead so very beneficial to us. And ep. 103. They carry the relicks of the blessed and ever-glorious martyr Stephen, which your holiness knows well, how reasonable it is you should honour, as we have done. The same sather writes at large of the discovery of St Stephen's relicks, and of many miracles wrought by them, De Civ. Dei 1, 22, c. 8.

Dei. 1. 22, c. 8.

Thus the primitive church, speaking by its most holy prelates, gives evidence for the doctrine of the church, and likewise for the practice of the faithful, in expressing their veneration for holy relicks, by kissing them and laying them to their eyes, and esteeming them as a supernatural help against evil spirits, and for the cure of diseases: So far we have from scripture and the primitive church.

But if there be this authority for facred relicks in general, are not these however subject to great abuses, while the same relick is pretended to be in diverse places; while such things are carried about for relicks, which have not sufficient authority; and thus the people are imposed on, in having trisles, and it may be, the bones of sinners made the object of their veneration, instead

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of Saints? It cannot be denied, but there are, and have been, great abuses in this point; but still the doctrine of the church is true; that holy relicks are to be had in veneration, and this is all the teaches; and fince the lays no tie on the faithful, of believing any one particular relick to be what it is pretended; hence the members of the church are as much at liberty of affenting or diffenting in this case, as those who are out of her communion. They may do here, as in all other cases subject to mistake or deceit, give credit, as far as there are grounds and motives to deferve it; and while this is allowed, if any are deceived by being over credulous, it is their own fault. All therefore that can be duly inferred from the supposition of abuses is, that Christians ought to be very cautious, and not let a feemingly pious credulity carry them against the rules of common prudence. But upon this account, to despise all relicks, and declaim against the use of them as superstitious, is not reasonable, nor christian; for this would be, to run into the other extreme, and to cure an imprudent credulity, by making way for irreligion and atheism. For, as in the supposition, there have been counterfeit relicks; have there not been likewife false prophets, false apostles, and

faife Golpels? Have there not been preachers of fedition and herefy, inflead of the Gospel, and the people been imposed on with the doctrine of devils, instead of God's word? How frequent is it now, as it ever has been, for prefuming men to stamp their own private opinions with the facred character of divine truths, and thus disperse poison, where the food of life is promised? Must therefore all of that coat be branded for impostors, and Christianity be hissed out of the world for a dream, because for one Christ there has appeared five hundred feducers? No; but it ought to oblige every. Christian to be cautious, and to make a difference between good and evil, between true and falfe. And as it becomes him not to deny every beggar that alks an alms, because a great part of them are dissemblers; fo neither can it be warrantable in any to pronounce fentence in groß against any thing relating to God's honour, because in some particulars they have discovered deceit.

But how is it to be understood, where people are abused, and pay a veneration, where it is not due? Much in the same manner, as when one has a real veneration in his heart, for a person whom he believes holy and just, and he, in reality, is nothing but a hypocrite or dissembler: Here is cer-

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tainly a great miliake, But it cannot be condemned as criminal, when a person has aed ted upon motives which he judged fufficient, according to the rules of common prudence, which however referved, is not still above mistake. I cannot fay so of those who obtrude counterfeit relicks upon the people: For as to cry up, and disperse relicks amongst the people, which those that do it, believe to be none, is the part of impostors; and as much money or friends as they make by fuch frauds, so much wrath they undoubtedly heap up to themselves. But amongst these I do not think those are to be numbered, who pretend to shew the same relick in feveral places; for this may be occasioned by several parts of the same body, &c. being in feveral places; or by some mistake in history, as to the person or name, and this without lessening the authority of the relick. For as feveral authors are maintained by historians for the same book; and the authors are disputed of some books, even of scripture, without bringing the authority of fuch books into question: So it may very well be here; the names and perfons may be disputed, and yet the relicks be nevertheless authentic.

Thus then stands this point; and now if the church proposing a doctrine so well established, requires no assent to the abuses, but as it prescribes to pastors to be careful in reforming, so exhorts all the faithful to be cautious against them; such abuses ought to be no exception against her doctrine, nor be made the condemnation of her practice, as far as it has the authority of scripture, antiquity, and christian reason to support it. Thus far only she requires the assent of the faithful; and thus far, O God, I beseech thee, may all be united in it.

such france. To members. But amonghed their leap up to members. But amonghed their leap to their leap to their leap to the more to be numbered, who precend to thew the latter relick of the who precend to the may be occasioned by leaves to the may be occasioned by leaves to the fame body. So heave in this real way to the fame body. So heave in this real way to be authority as no before authority of the latter. For as leveral authors are many teller, for as leveral authors are many the authors are deputed of tome book; and the authors are deputed of tome book; and the authors of leaves to the new of the new to the new the new the name of the new with books into questions. So it focs may be disputed, and yet the relicks be revertibeless authentic.

Thus then florids this point; and now it the church proposing, a riotinge to well

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nurity. &c. a fount, for obtaining the

Nativity of the Bleffed Vingin.

TTE have already spoken of the Rosary, and in that thewn the ground of all devotion to the Blessed Virgin; I there declared, that faying the beads was a particular devotion, fuch as the church obliged none to use; I now add for their satisfaction, who unjustly make exception against them, because of ten prayers being said to the Virgin Mary, for one to God; that if any think fit to alter the method of the beads, and fay ten Our Fathers for one Hail Mary, or even without one, they will incur no censure of the church, but be commended for their devotion. And this I have feen prescribed to fuch as could not read, to fay three or five Our Fathers, (numbering them on their fingers or beads, for this is the only use of them) and to add at the end of them a Glory be to the Father, &c. in adoration of the Bleffed Trinity; with orders to repeat these leveral times, according to their different duties or necessities; as once, in thanksgiving to God for all bleffings; a fecond time,

for pardon of fin; a third time, for alking fuch virtues as they most want, as patience, purity, &c. a fourth, for obtaining the divine help against usual fins; a fifth, for protection in all danger; a fixth, for a happy death; a feventh, for family, friends, enemies, &c. Then another time to repeat them in the same order, in memory and thanksgiving for all the mysteries of our redemption; as for the incarnation of the Son of God; for his birth in the stable; for his falling; for his bloody sweat; for being accused faisly, scourged at a pillar, crowned with thorns, crucified, &c. This, I fay, I have feen prescribed, and I add it here at large for their fakes who can neither read nor understand how to exercise their thoughts in prayer; fince, by following this prescription, they may at any time employ a quar-ter or half an hour in prayer, and as well as those who are best provided with books. But now to some exceptions.

What means the custom of praying in the ftreets, walking, and fometimes dropping a bead, even while they are talking? What means the great indulgences granted to the votaries of the Virgin Mary, and on other occasions? First, As to the custom of some places, of praying in the streets, there is no directions of the church for fo doing , but

charity obliges me to believe it has been taken up upon the words of St Paul, who advises Christians to Pray always, and without ceasing; and if it be done upon this principle, not with defign of being esteemed devout, but fincerely to raile their minds to God as far as circumftances will permit charity will eafily excuse it: But if it be done like the Pharifees, it must be condemned as pharifaical; and if carried on mixing prayers with discourse, it must be judged as the effect of custom, and that such diffracted prayer is to little purpole. Thus, as far as it can be understood to be well done, we approve of it; but as far as it is vain or useless, we condemn it as much as facraments out and not to give themsradto

that common mistakes may be removed, and fuller account is to be given of them. And in the first place it must be observed, that an indulgence is not a pardon granted for finds to come, nor even for sins past, nor a licence to commit sin; these are notions which deserve the abhorrence of all Christians; since there cannot be any thing more injurious to God or our salvation, than for man to usure or pretend to a power of giving leave to commit sin against the Alexanighty. This therefore is what we detect

withdall Christians, as contrary to the fundamentals of the Gospel which we profess.

andly. To come to a better understanding. it must be observed, what all must confess who have looked into antiquity, that in the primitive church, and in the purelt times of christianity, public penances were imposed by the canons on all public finners; as two years penance for theft, feven for fornication, eleven for perjury, fifteen for adultery, twenty for murder, the whole life for apoltacy, and fo in proportion for others, as is fet down by St Bafil. A part of thefe penances was to fland at the church door, and in penitential habit to own their crime; to be excluded from public prayer, from the facraments. &c. and not to give them the communion, till their years of prayer were finished This was the rigorous discipline of the primitive church for giving finners a true fenfe of their crimes, and preventing all kinds of relaptes hand a son at sorrantibe.

But however it was still in the power of the bishop to shorten the time of these penances, if he found just reasons for it; such were extraordinary servour in the penitent, or some dangerous sickness or persecution. For it being then a general concern, that none should die without the sacraments, therefore sickness and persecution were jude:

ged sufficient motives for dispensing with the usual rigour of penance. And whenever the regular penance was abridged or dispensed with, that was called an Indulgence; because it was the effect of an indulgence or compassion of the mother, that is, of the church towards her children, in considera-

tion of their good. Joseph average air side

This account of the primitive church proceeding thus with penitents, and dispensing, in the cases now mentioned with the rigour, of discipline, and shortening their penitentiary humiliations by the power of the bishops, is to be found in all histories of antiquity, and is related by Dr Cave in his Primitive Christianity, or the Religion of the ancient Christians, 3 part. c. 5, p. 369, and 374. And the whole matter may be easily understood by a practice yet in force, where standing in a white sheet in the church is the penance; and a release from it upon due motives, by order of the bishop, would be an Indulgence.

An Indulgence then, is a release of canonical penances, upon due motives, by order of the church; (to which she joins her prayers, for a release of temporal punishments due to past offences) and the thing can be no more questioned in church than in state, but that the authority which enjoins

penalties can release them.

But is it not generally held, that by indulgences men are freed from the obligations of punishment, not only in the face of the church, but also of what is due before God, and to his justice, for pardoned fins? It is what the church prays for But fince it is not an article of our faith, that her prayers in this are always heard, a person may be a true member of the church without allenting to it. All that our profession requires, and so the council of Trent, is to believe that the power of indulgences bas been given and left in the church by Jefus Christ; and that the use of them is very beneficial to all christian people. So far then is a term of communion; but fince the council of Trent is filent as to all other particulars, none are obliged to subscribe to them.

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But if this be not of faith, is there not deceit then in the usual grant of indulgences, fince these do not only extend to the remission of canonical penances, but likewise of such punishment as is due before God to sin: No, there is no deceit; for as the physician proceeds upon good principles, and free from all deceit, who prescribes physic to his patient, though he be not certain of the effect; but only that it can do no hurt, and may very probably do good: As the trader and every sober man, proceeds

prudently in what he undertakes, when he uses all probable and likely means, though the effect and gain be uncertain a So it is here; for suppose the church in this practice proceeds only upon a probable opinion, that her prayers will be heard, this is very agreeable to the rules of honesty and prudence: The grounds are sufficient for hoping the good effect proposed; and yet if it should fail, the faithful however are no losers; since the special works of piety and charity, which they are to perform for gaining an indulgence, are such as may be very beneficial to them; so that, if they should be disappointed of what was proposed, they are gainers still.

But may not this be an occasion of the faithful neglecting to bring forth worthy fruits of penance proportioned to their past crimes, upon the persuasion that they are now discharged of the punishment? It cannot be so, but by their own fault; because, though it be of faith; that there is power in the church of granting indulgences; yet they are taught that this particular indulgence may be invalid and fruitless, as it may sometimes happen, either for want of authority in the giver, or through deficiency in the cause for which it is granted, or because prayers for another are not always heard; and that if valid in itself, yet it may

easily be invalid to them, for want of their due compliance with the conditions required of a fincere repentance, &c. And therefore all well advised Christians, as Bellarmin observes, so accept of indulgences, as besides them to be careful in performing worthy works of penance, as their sins require. For if in the sacraments themselves, where there is greater assurance of the effect, they are still taught not to rest with such security, as to think all suture repentance unnecessary; much less are they to have this security here, where there is more reason to question the certainty of the effect.

lifOne question more upon this subject : If there ought to be a sufficiency in the cause for the validity of an indulgence, as is generally taught, and has been now hinted; what means the indulgences mentioned in books, of to many years pardon for faying a fhort prayer; and of many thousand years, for vifiting fome particular churches; with others of this kind? Bellarmin answers this question, who says, The true history of indulgences is not to be taken from adversaries; no nor from I know not what petty books; but from the papal bulls, and the records of the church: For, no doubt, but in such little, uncertain, and nameless pamphlets, we may meet with many fictions and

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corrupt stories; and having given some instances, he then adds; Never did I read in any approved authors, that indulgences for thousands of days or years were ever granted, much less for hundreds of thoulands: For the popes used only to grant indulgences for fo many years as the penance enjoined should otherwise have lasted; which ordinarily was two, three, five, feven, ten, or twenty years, or at most for one's life. In which words this learned author feems to suspect all the indulgences mentioned, as suppositious. But however, if there have been any fuch formerly granted, the council of Trent has done enough to take off the scandal of such remis discipline, in admonishing, that the granting indulgences be done with great moderation, according to the ancient and approved custom of the church; lest, by too great remissiness, ecclefiaftical discipline should be weakened. If then there have been abuses in this point, it is plain they are not approved, but difcountenanced by the church.

And now it being evident, that indulgences are not pardons for fin, but only at the most a release of such temporal punishment as remains due to fins, already forgiven by a sincere repentance in the sacrament of penance; and that neither our professions of faith, nor councils, extend this beyond canonical penances, (which being enjoined by the canons, it is certain the church has power to remit) and the prayers of the church; I do not fee why this should be made a matter of dispute. If the pastors of the church, and the faithful in practice, extend their hopes beyond this, they have fufficient reasons for so doing, and their piery cannot be juffly cenfured, which propofes so much good, though without affurance of the effect. However, the church, in this, lays no obligation on any, but leaves all to their choice; she has manifested her defires for reforming all abuses: Where then can the reason be for non-communion with her in this point? Remove all divisions, () God, and give peace in our days.

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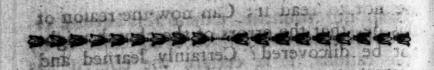
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ces are not partions for fine but only at the most a release of tech remporal punishmentas remains due to fine, already forgiven be a fineere repentance in the factorisent of persance; and that neither our professions of



SEPTEMBER XXI.

St MATTHEW to swood

ON this day of an apostle, who, besides preaching the word, committed it to writing, the subject of our discourse shall be of the written word, and in particular of the reading it, it being under some restraint, and not indifferently permitted to all.

And first is to be considered the reason of this restraint, and whether there be any colour or truth in that which is fo positively pretended: I hat the reason of forbidding it was for keeping the people in darkness, and not to have the opportunity of discovering the errors of their church. For feeing to the bottom of this at once, let the matter of fact be stated; That all learned, sober, difcreet persons might have leave to read the bible; and that they only were to be denied it, whose ignorance, curious and giddy remper, gave occasion to fear they would abuse it to their own destruction. Now let common reason hear and judge! The learned, grave, and judicious persons may have leave to read the bible; the ignorant and giddy are not to read it: Can now the reason of this be, that the errors of the church might not be discovered? Certainly learned and discreet men are more likely to discover error than the ignorant; if then the church were conscious of errors, and that reading the bible was most likely to bring them to light, the would have more reason to apprehend this discovery from the learned than from the ignorant; and consequently the restraint would have been upon them, more than others, were this apprehension the reafon of the prohibition. Let the case be put in any other matter; if artists expose their work to be examined by men of skill; if physicians desire the most experienced to consider the method they use with their patients; if writers or printers leave their books to be perused by the learned and nicelt critics, and so of all others; is this an argument of their being conscious of deceit, error, or mistake in what they have done, and that they are afraid of its being discovered? Or, is it not rather an evident proof of their not being jealous of any deceit; while they appeal to the examen of those who are best qualified for making the discovery? What grounds then of probability can there be in this scandal advanced against the church, of being conscious of errors, and fearing their

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discovery by reading the bible, when she leaves all the original text, and the Latin version, promiscuously to be read by all learned men; gives leave for those that are so-ber, judicious, and discreet, to read the vulgar translation; and only excepts against those who seem to have rashness and folly mixed with their ignorance? If there be any thing of proof in such arguing, then the whole world is to be arraigned of madness, in desiring such to be judges who are best qualified for judging, and not making choice of those who know least of the matter, and by their ignorance and rashness give least hopes of their judging aright.

This then can be no reason of the restraint being put upon reading the bible in the vulgar tongue. What then was the reason? It was, that it might not be abused by ignorance, curiosity, and presumption; and that by corrupt minds the food of life might not be turned into posson. When the rashness of men was such, that every one that could but read judged himself sufficiently qualified for expounding the difficulties of holy writ, and positively to pronounce upon its profoundest mysteries; when, by this presumption, the beautiful order, established by the Gospel in the christian church, was dissigned by infinite schifms, and in every cor-

ner started up some leader of a new congregation: When every one that was not already engaged, undertook to judge of thefe divitions, and by this uturpation put himfelf in danger of adding to the number, by undertaking to finish what others had done but by halves; when thus ignorance, rashness, and prefumption were got up into the chair, pretended scripture for their commission, made scripture their plea, and by facrilegious abuses, made this the instrument of their most unchristian attempts: Was it not reafonable that established authority should then appear, and by prudent restraints endeavour to put a stop to these evils? Could it have found an expedient for making all fober and wife, it would have looked for no other; but this being not in its power, what could it do less, than bring those under government who knew not how to govern themselves, and cut fhort that liberty which they abused to their own destruction? This it was the church did; and how could the have deferved the name of a church, or a mother, had the then stood still, and in silence beheld her children, by their rashness, bringing ruin on their own fouls, and those of their generation after them? And is it not visible, that the motive of thus exerting her power was not to keep the people in ignorance, but to Vol. VII.

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prevent the ill effects of their ignorance, and that by their prelumption of knowing, they might not abuse the principles of divine truths for building up a Babel of errors?

The reasonableness of thus proceeding, is fufficiently owned by those who are not of her communion; nay, and even by those, in fact at least (see the wonderful power of justice) who with the greatest bitterness inveigh against her for what she has done. Hear it from one, who, prescribing the neceffary cautions to be used in reading the boly scripture, hints at the great indisposition of many readers, We are to come, fays he, to the holy scriptures, with a preparation of mind to embrace indifferently whatever God there reveals, as the object of our faith: That we bring our opinions, not as the clue by which to unfold the scripture, but to be tried and regulated by it. The want of this has been of pernicious confequence in matters both of faith and speculation. Men are commonly prepoffested strongly with their own notions; and their errand to feripture is not to lend them light to judge of them, but aids to back and defend them .- Being once engaged, they ranfack for texts that carry fome correspondency to the opinions they have imbibed; and those how do they rack and scrue to bring them to a perfect conformity, and improve every little probability into a demonstration? On the other side, the contrary texts they look on as enemies, and consider them no farther, than to provide sences and guards against them: So they bring texts, not into the scales to weigh, but into the sield to skirmish, as partisans and auxiliaries of such or such opinions.

By this force of prepossession it is, that the sacred rule, which is the measure and standard of all rectitude, is itself bowed and distorted to countenance and abet the most contrary tenets; and like a variable picture, represents differing shapes, according to the light in which you view it. And sure we cannot do a worse office, than to represent it thus dissonant to itself. Yet thus it must still be, till men come unbiassed to the reading of it.

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Without this, though we may call scripture the rule of saith, and judge of controversies; yet it is manifest we make it not so, but reserve still the last appeal to our own prejudicate sancies; and then no wonder that we sall under the same blindness which our Saviour upbraids to the Jews; That seeing we see not, neither do we understand, Matt. xiii. 14. For he that will not be saved God's way, will hardly be so by his own. He that resolves not impartially to

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embrace all the scripture's dictates, comes to them as unsincerely as the remnant of the Yews did to Yeremiah to enquire of the Lord for them; which he no sooner had done, but they protest against his message, Yer. xlii. 20; and may expect as fatal an event.

But there is a fet of men who deal yet more infincerely with the word; that read it infidiously, on purpose to collect matter of objection and cavil; that with a malicious diligence compare texts in hope to find contradictions; and read attentively, but to no other end than to remark incohe:

rencies and defects in the ftyle. not but

In these words this author, prescribing cautions for reading the scripture, declares the great abuses of it. And now if the question was debated, whether a pastor of the church observing some of his slock under such indispositions of mind or judgment; that their reading the scripture would be very likely for no other end than to ransack texts for the confirmation of pre-conceived errors, or for discovering contradictions, to bring it into derision; whether, I say, it were not adviseable for a pastor, in such ease, to desire such persons to sorbear the reading it, and rather to hear the truths, there delivered, from the church. If this

question was debated, might there not be good reasons for resolving it in the affirmative? And if such a resolution was takens is it not plain what the motives would be. fince whatever constructions prejudice might put upon it, it is nothing but christian compaffion, and true charity to the parties, would be the reason for voting them under this restraint? This then is the very thing the church has done. She defires all those may have leave to read the bible in the vulgar tongue, whose piety and good disposition give hopes of their receiving benefit from it; and denies this favour to such, whom their pastors observe to be of that ill dispofition as to be likely to prejudice their own fouls by the abuse of it: Now the motive of this is not to hide from them the light of God's truth; for while the requires them to forbear the book, fhe takes pains in shewing them this light; only with this difference, that she leaves it not with them to blind themselves, through their own ill management of it. Neither is this to contradict those ancient fathers who encouraged the reading; for they encouraged no other reading, but where there was hope of benefit; and certainly to be watchful against abusive neaders only, with liberty to all others, has no part of contradiction to this: Neither is

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embrace all the scripture's dictates, comes to them as unsincerely as the remnant of the Jews did to Jeremiah to enquire of the Lord for them; which he no sooner had done, but they protest against his message, Jer. xlii. 20; and may expect as fatal an event.

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In thefe words this author, prescribing cautions for reading the scripture, declares the great abuses of it. And now if the question was debated, whether a pastor of the church observing some of his flock under fuch indispositions of mind or judgment; that their reading the fcripture would be very likely for no other end than to ranfack texts for the confirmation of pre-conceived errors, or for discovering contradictions, to bring it into derision; whether, I fay, it were not adviseable for a pastor, in such case, to desire such persons to forbear the reading it, and rather to hear the truths, there delivered, from the church. If this water War literature and the state of the

question was debated, might there not be good reasons for resolving it in the affirmative? And if such a resolution was taken is it not plain what the motives would be. fince whatever constructions prejudice might put upon it, it is nothing but christian compaffion, and true charity to the parties, would be the reason for voting them under this restraint? This then is the very thing the church has done. She defires all those may have leave to read the bible in the vulgar tongue, whose piety and good disposition give hopes of their receiving benefit from it; and denies this favour to such, whom their paftors observe to be of that ill dispofition as to be likely to prejudice their own fouls by the abuse of it: Now the motive of this is not to hide from them the light of God's truth; for while the requires them to forbear the book, fhe takes pains in shewing them this light; only with this difference, that fhe leaves it not with them to blind themselves, through their own ill management of it. Neither is this to contradict those ancient fathers who encouraged the reading; for they encouraged no other reading, but where there was hope of benefit; and certainly to be watchful against abusive readers only, with liberty to all others, has no part of contradiction to this: Neither is

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to writing; so we confess it is very instructive in what a Christian is to know; that nothing can give him a greater sense of God's power, mercy, and justice; that from this, as from a sountain of living water, he may drink in the purest principles of the Gospel; and accordingly she offers it to all whose piety prepares them for this happiness: But if she excludes the unworthy, if she keeps them at a distance who would posson the fountain, this is not contrary to the end of its being written; for certainly the end of its penning was not thus to be abused.

Here then is the crime of the church capable of being exposed under the worst of colours, where there is but ignorance or malice enough to lay them on; and fo capable of being understood in a better fense, that many, though otherwise adversaries, seeing the mischiefs of a promiscuous reading, and of the liberty of interpreting, have owned the reasonableness of the prohibition. But of this prohibition it is to be observed, that, as the occasion of it was the humour of those times, bent with violence upon novelties and innovations; fo now, that humour being spent, and the minds of the faithful generally more fettled, there is a greater connivance in the execution of the

order, so that throughout France the bible is generally read by all. Now if this whole matter be thus duly considered, separate from the scandals put upon it, I cannot but hope all that are friends to charity might easily be reconciled to it, and not let this be an exception against an universal peace, such as the Gospel requires; which, I besech thee, O God, to grant for thy greater honour, and the common good of all that believe in thee.

the founding, this is not contrary to the end of its being written; for certainly the end of the penning was not thus to be abuted.

Here then is the grane of the church capable of being exticled under the world of colours, where the for the put ignorance of malice enough to capable of being aucrossors in a bener lende that many though of yards advertastes, leeding the matchiels of a promifeuous reading, and of the liberty of interpreting, have and of the liberty of interpreting, have that of the prohibition that at the occasion of it was the billion of the prohibition that at the occasion of it was the humour of those times, then with violence upon no admit being incur and innevations, to now, that the stiffies and innevations, to now, that the faithful Circums and the minds of the faithful creater commune in the circums of the faithful creater commune in the circums of the

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SEPTEMBER XXIX.

ST MICHAEL.

THE subject I chuse for this day's entertainment, shall be to enquire, whether the scandal of uncharitableness be just, which is generally laid to the members of the church, while they express themselves with so much severity against those who are out of her communion, and seem to shew

but little hopes of their falvation.

And as to this, I think it must be owned, there is nothing of uncharitableness intended in all they say of this kind; since it proceeds from no other root, but of a full persuasion, that the church, of which they are members, is the true church of Christ, that Catholic church, which all Christians by their creed are required to believe, that church, which Christ in the Gospel has commanded all to hear under the penalty of his displeasure, and being looked upon as publicans or heathens, Mat. xviii. 17. and consequently, that all such, who by obstinacy or a criminal neglect, are not in the communion of this church, are in the displeasure of

God, are disobedient to him, and not in that way which Christ has appointed for the whole world, as the way to falvation. This being the ground of what they fay, there can be no uncharitableness in it; but it must, on the contrary, be owned, as the effect of the greatest charity: For if, it be charity to call upon a traveller, that is going out of his way, and fet him right; if it be charity to advise a neighbour against all fuch mistakes, which are likely in any kind to be prejudicial to him, whether in health, reputation, or estate; it must be much more so in a Christian that calls upon his neighbour, upon the conviction, that he is not in the way, which Christ has ordained for salvation, and that if he goes on, it must be with danger of perishing. This, I say, must be charity, because it is the effect of the greatest love towards him, and the desire of his falvation; even a participation of that charity, which moved the prophets to call upon the Jews to forfake their evil ways, and return to their God; which moved Christ to undertake the work of our salvation, and the apostles to expose their lives for the conversion of their neighbour. All this is from one and the same root, even from the defire of contributing to their neighbour's falvation. And if this, of which

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we here speak, be supposed to be built upon a mistuke; yet it is charity still, such as deferves rather thanks than reproach; for as the mistake diminishes not my charity, when I give to one, whom I believe to be in extreme want, though in reality he be not; so neither is the charity of those persons lessened, who, upon conviction of their neighbour's going out of the way, call upon him, though it should prove that he is in the

right.

That they do this upon a deliberate and full conviction, is evident from their choice and profession of a religion, which has many distinculties in the practice; such as obliges them to perpetual self-denials; and then lies here under so many temporal disadvantages, in excluding them from all preferments of honour and interest; and exposing them to so many severities, as often as the government thinks fit, that their only motive of embracing it must be, because they are convinced of its being the ancient and true church of Christ; and that they cannot satisfy the obligations he has laid upon them by his commands, nor live in hopes of his promises, but by being members of it.

But if they are convinced of their church being the ancient true church of Christ, is fuch ill thoughts of all others who are not of their communion? Do not they see these believe in Christ, and all the other fundamentals of Christian religion, as much as themselves; that they live piously and justly, put their trust in God, and keep his commandments; and is it not rashness, then, thus to pronounce them out of the way of salvation? It is certainly rashness according to the modern scheme of religion, which makes up the church of Christ of all separate congregations, however otherwise divided in faith, so they do but believe in Christ, with some other sew points which they call fundamental.

But the question is, whether it be rashness, according to that scheme of religion,
and of the church, which is found in scripture, and in the constant practice of the primitive Christians? The scripture describes
the church to be as one flock, one body,
made up indeed of different parts, but all
united in the same faith, and with a due subordination, that while it was to be spread
throughout the world, yet it was to retain
the order and beauty of one spiritual government; hence all the members of it were
commanded to be united not only in faith,
but also in charity and obedience; and

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these injunctions are laid so strictly, by the express order of Christ its head, that all divisions, both in faith and government (that is, heresy and schism) are set down as sins, which divide from the head, and exclude from all hopes of salvation. This is the character of Christ's church delivered in the New Testament, and must be owned by all

who observe what they read.

The practice of the primitive church, even in the times of its confessed purity, was conformable to this character, and therefore in this fense understood the scripture. It being evident to all that have confulted antiquity, that the pastors of the church cut off from their communion, not only those who did not believe aright of Christ; but likewife all fuch as opposed any other point of the doctrine she had received and taught: as also those who divided themselves from her government; that is, all fuch as broke the unity of the church, and endeavoured to bring confusion inro the house of peace: Herefy or schism was no more tolerated by them, than fedition and rebellion in a common-wealth; a Novatian has no more fayour from them than an Arian; nor a Donatist than a Macedonian: Their business is to preserve peace and charity, where God has commanded them to be kept; and they are so far from esteeming them guiltless, who by any separation, whether in doctrine or government, disturb this peace, that they equal it to the worst of all crimes; think that no good work can be acceptable to God, when a person is under this guilt, and that he is not in the way to salvation. But I must give their own words, for otherwise none will believe their rigour in this particular.

St Cyprian de Unit. Eccl. He that leaves the church of Christ, will never come to the rewards of Christ: He is a stranger, he is profane, he is an enemy. He cannot now have God for his father, who has not the church for his mother. If any one could escape, that was out of Noah's ark, then likewife may he escape, who is out of the church .-- Whoever disturbs the peace of Christ, makes war against Christ. And he that gathers any where out of the church, breaks in pieces the church of Christ .-Whoever does not preserve this unity, does not keep the law of God, has not the faith of the Father and the Son, he has not life nor falvation --- What facrifice do they imagine they offer, who are in contention with the priests? Can they think that Christ is with them in their meetings, being affembled out of the church? Such as thefe, though they suffer death in the confession of his name, yet is not their blood capable of washing out this stain: The unpardonable and horrid crime of schism is not to be expiated by suffering: He can be no martyr, who is not in the church.

St Irenaus, 1. 4, adv. Har. c. 43. We are bound to obey those priests who have their fuccession from the apostles; who, with the fuccession of their episcopal charge, have received, according to the ordinance of God, a fure gift of truth. But for others who are not in communion with the principal fuccession, in whatever place they hold their meetings, we are to look on them either as heretics, and men of pernicious doctrine; or as schismatics, full of pride and self-love; or, finally, as hypocrites, carrying on their defign in hopes of gain and for vain-glory. Now all these depart from the truth: And fuch as are heretics, who bring strange fire to the altan of God, that is, strange doctrines, shall be confumed with fire from heaven like Nadab and Abibu, Lev. x. Such as rebel against the truth, and set on others against the church, have their place in hell; being swallowed up by the earth, as were the complices of Chore, Dathan, and Abiron, Num 16. And those who make schisms, and break the unity of the church, shall

have the same punishment with Jeroboam from the hand of God, 3 Kings 14 .- And c. 62, He will judge those who make fchisms, who are abominable, void of the love of God, and having more concern for their own profit, than for the unity of the church; who for inconsiderable, and any reasons, divide and break asunder the great and glorious body of Christ, and endeavour. as much as lies in them, utterly to ruin it; having peace in their mouths, but working destruction; truly straining at a guar, and fwallowing a camel; for whatever evil they redrefs, it is much less than the evil of schism. He will likewise judge those who believe not the truth, that is, such as are out of the church and to will be difficult determine

St Augustin l. de Unit Eccl. c 4. The head is the only begotten Son of God, and the body his church; bridegroom and bride; two in one flesh. Whoever believes otherwise of the head than is taught in scripture, although they are in all places as wide as the church, yet they are not in the church. Again, whoever assent to the scripture in all things concerning the head, and yet refuse communion in the unity of the church, they are not in the church; because they reject the testimony of Christ concerning his body, which is the church.—They who believe

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that Christ was incarnate, that he arose again in the same slesh in which he was born and suffered; that he is the Son of God, God with God, &c. and yet do so disagree with his body, which is the church, that they have not communion with the whole, wherever dissused, but only with some part which is separated, it is evident they are not in the catholic church. And c. 19, None can arrive to salvation and life everlasting, except he has Christ for his head; but none can have Christ for his head, unless he be in his body, which is the church.

And Ep. 204, ad Donat. Press. Being out of the pale of the church, separated from its unity and bond of charity, thou wouldest not escape damnation, though thou shouldest be burnt alive in confession of the name of Christ.

Again, Enarr. in Pf. 88, Let us love our Lord God, let us love his church; God, as our Father; the church, as our mother.

—No body can offend one, and oblige the other: Let no one fay, I go to idols indeed, I confult magicians; but yet I do not forfake the church of God, I am a catholic still; for thus keeping to your mother, you offend your Father. Another says, Far be it from me,

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I do not go to cunning men, I consult no oracles of devils, but yet I am a follower of Donatus: What will it avail thee not to have offended thy Father, who takes revenge of those who offend their mother? What fignifies it to own a God, to honour him, to confess Christ, and that he sits at the right hand of his Father, if thou blasphemest his church ?- Take care therefore, my beloved, unanimously to hold God your Father, and

the church your mother.

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Again, 1. 1. de Bapt. c. 49, A man may have all things out of the Catholic church, besides salvation. He may have faith, baptism, and the rest of the Sacraments; he may have the word of God; he may believe and preach in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; he may distribute his substance to the poor, and give his life for the name of Christ; he can find salvation no where but in the Catholic church. quam nisi in Ecclesia Catholica salutem poterit invenire, extra ecclesiam Catholicam totum babere potest, præter salutem.

Thus speak the most eminent fathers of the primitive church, not only against such as denied Christ, but against those who having a faith in him, and believing the other articles of the creed, were not in communion with the Catholic church, but joining with some particular congregation, were separated from her; and for this alone pronounce their guilt to be such as excludes

from the kingdom of heaven.

Now, where there is fo much ground from fcripture, fo great authority from the practice of the primitive church, and from the consent of her pastors; how can it be judged rashness to join in the same sentiments with them? If to break the peace of the Catholic church, if to be out of her communion, was then of fo dreadful confequence, as they declare, it must be so still; and if, without this, neither faith nor good works were acceptable to falvation in their time, it must be the same still, since the ordinance of God is not changed. Thus then is this supposed severity cleared from rashness; and where there is so much ground to apprehend the danger, where can be the uncharitableness of putting persons in mind of it? It is however much better to venture this censure, than to let others go on feeming fecure of their falvation in fuch a way, which antiquity declares, will never lead to it. I am not for narrowing the way of falvation; but if the Gospel and the primitive church declare it fo narrow, it is fit all should know it. This principle then of antiquity must be received, that to be uni-

ted to the Catholic church is necessary to falvation; but still, fince we cannot tell, how far invincible ignorance may excuse, or what may be the dispositions or desires of those that die, and whether in heart they may not interiorly be united to the church; therefore none ought to pronounce of any in particular, but we must leave it to God to judge, to whom judgment belongs.

O God, fince thou hast manifested the way of falvation, convince all, that defire to be faved, that they must feek it thy way, and not their own; lead all into this way; and let it be no more a scandal to direct others into it: And for me, may I never be guilty of any other uncharitableness, than to shew those who are out of the way, the path that leads to life a selected out the gentle and the

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OCTOBER XXVIII.

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SS. SIMON and Jude.

THE subject of this day's discourse shall be of the invocation of saints; of which the church teaches us, as it is delivered in the council of Trent, Sess. 25. It is good and profitable to call upon the saints, and to have recourse to their prayers, aid, and assistance, whereby to obtain of God many benefits, through the merits of his Son Jesus Christ, who is our Redeemer and Saviour.

We have formerly shewn that the saints and angels pray for us before the throne of God; as it appears from Zachariah i. 12, where the angel prays to the Lord of Hosts for the cities of Jerusalem and Judah. 2dly, That the blessed in heaven abounding in charity; for charity never faileth, 1 Cor. xiii. 8; it must be the effect of this charity to love their brethren, to desire and pray for their good: Their charity, while yet imperfect on earth, had all these good effects; how much more now in heaven? For certainly their being made happy in the possession of God, does not make them less, but

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more charitable. And if Dives be described, even while in hell, to have that folicitude for his brethren left on earth, as to ufe means to prevent their coming into that place of torments; how can it he questioned but the bleffed are as defirous for the falvation of their brethren on earth, and manifest these desires before God? The souls of the martyrs cry aloud for judgment against those who shed their blood, Rev. vi. 10; and does not their charity cry as loud for mercy to others? It is plain here they, cry with loud voices to God; and who can fay of the bleffed, that it is not fo much for mercy as, judgment? But I need not press this, which is fo evident, and confessed by so many who are not in communion with us.

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If the bleffed in heaven pray for us, then certainly it must be lawful for us to desire and ask that they would pray for us, which is the substance of this article. In which the words of scripture give some grounds; as when Jacob blesses his two grand-sons, Gen. xlviii 16. The angel which delivered me from all evil bless these chilaren; and let my name be invocated upon them, and the names of my fathers Abraham and Isaac. And Rev.i. Grace be to you, and peace from him who is, and who was, and is to come; and from the seven spirits who are in the sight of his throne.

Is not this to pray for peace upon the faithful from God and his angels, and to defire

their patronage?

That the primitive church believed this to be lawful and profitable, let the most eminent pastors of it give in the evidence: St Basil, in his sermon upon the forty martyrs, thus speaks to the faithful of his time: You have often endeavoured to find one to pray for you; now here are forty pouring forth prayers to God with one consent for you.—He that is in affliction, has recourse to these; and he that is in prosperity, betakes himself likewise to them: The one, that he may find relief; the other, to beg a continuance of his happiness. Here a mother praying for her children is heard: A wise petitions a safe return for her husband abroad, and health for him when he is sick.

St Gregory Naziansen, Orat. 20, on St Basil: But thou, O holy and divine soul, look down from heaven upon us, and either restrain by thy prayers the thorn in the slesh, which God has permitted for our exercise; or at least prevail that we may bear it with courage, and direct our whole life to that which shall be most for our advantage. And Orat. 18, He thus addresses to St Cyprian: Do you, full of compassion, look upon us from heaven; direct our words and life, and

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help me, who have the charge of this holy flock.

St Gregory Nyssen. Orat. upon St Theodore, Martyr, thus calls upon him: Intercede and pray for our country, before the Lord and Sovereign of the Universe.—Although thou hast left this world, yet thou knowest our desires, our wants, and the necessities of human life. Ask for peace, that these our public assemblies be not interrupted.—And if a more powerful plea and intercession be necessary, summon all thy brother martyrs, and join with them in prayer.

St Chrysostom, in his homily upon St Bernice, and other martyrs, thus speaks to his people: Let us visit them, not only on this day of their festival, but also on other days: Let us pray, and heartily beseech them to be our patronesses. For their interest is great, not only whilst alive, but after death also; nay, much greater since their death; for now they bear the scars of Christ, and shewing their wounds, their Sovereign can deny them nothing.

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St Ambrose, 1. de Viduis. We are to defire the assistance of the angels, who are appointed for our defence: We are to pray to the martyrs, whose patronage we may justly claim, on the account of their bodies, which we possess. They can pray for the remisfion of our fins, who cancelled their own, if guilty of any, by the effusion of their blood—Let us not be ashamed to call them in advocates for our failings, who, when alive, were themselves sensible of infirmities.

St Jerome against Vigilantius: You fav. fays be, in your libel, that while we are alive we can pray for one another; but that being dead, no man's prayer will be heard for another; especially, fince the martyrs praying that their blood might be revenged, could not obtain it. If the apostles and martyrs, being yet in the body, can pray for others, when as yet they ought to be folicitous for themselves; how much more can they do it now, after they have received their crowns, after their victories and triumphs? Moses, one fingle man, obtained pardon of God for fix hundred thousand armed men; and Stephen obtained mercy for his perfecutors; and being now in heaven with Christ, are they less able?

Theodoret, h. de cur. Grac. aff. Ser. 8. In the temples of the martyrs we meet several times in the day to praise the God of martyrs. Those that are in health, pray for a continuance of it; and such as are sick, that they may recover.—Those who are to begin a journey, ask of these to accompany them,

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and to be their guides in the way; and fuch as are returned fafe, here come to pay their thanks. Neither do they make their addresses to them as to gods; but only befeech them, as holy men, to intercede to God for them. And that such as ask with faith have their requests granted, the gifts they bring in acknowledgment of their cures are a sufficient argument. For some hang up eyes, others feet, others hands, made in

gold or filver.

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St Augustin, Ser. 17, de Verb. Ap. c. 1. It is the church discipline, as the faithful well know, that when the names of the martyrs are rehearfed at the altar of God, we do not pray for them, but only for other faithful departed: For it is an injury to pray for a martyr, to whole prayers we ought to recommend ourselves. And in I. de Civ. Dei. 1. 22, c 8. he brings many instances of such as had received miraculous helps at the farines of faints; one of a pious mother, who brought her dead child to the shrine of -St Stephen, and there of the bleffed martyr demanded life for her fon. A thing both commended by St Augustin as a testimony of her great faith, and confirmed for fuch y God, in restoring her son to life at the ntercession of the faint : God, fays he, doing , per martyrem, by bis martyr.

Vol. VII.

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Thus speak the most eminent passors of the primitive church, and it being generally in their sermons to the people, it cannot be doubted but they approved the practice as lawful and profitable, as the church has declared; and consequently, that the doctrine is primitive, though the definition be mo-

dern.

Neither is this practice what St Paul condemns, Coloff. ii. 18, as the worshipping or religion of angels. For these words of the apostle are directed against the errors of Simon Magus and others, who held the angels to be our mediators, and not Christ; non tenens caput, not bolding the head, as the apostle here speaks, and prescribed sacrifices to be offered to them. So St Chrysostom, Ho. 7, upon this place. The same are expounded by St Jerome and Theodoret, of an idolatry of the Jews, in worshipping the angels as the givers of the law, by whom the faithful were persuaded to forsake Christ. To turn them, therefore, against the doctrine of the church, is not the meaning of the apostle, but a force upon the text.

Neither is this practice injurious to the mediation of Christ; since it is to desire no more of the saints than what we ask of sinners. To desire others to pray for us, is not injurious to Christ's mediation; but it

is what he approves, and all practife; and if this charity may be asked of men, and of the fult on earth; why not of the just in heaven? We ask nothing of them, but as we do of our fellow-members on earth; that is, as the council declares, that we may obtain benefits of God, through Jefus Christ: In whatever words our defires are expressed, no more is meant by them. And if we forfake not Christ, when we pray for ourselves; for we forfake him not when we defire others to join with us in prayer: This is no more than to increase the number of petitioners, which can be no dishonour to God, but to acknowledge him to be above all; and if the bleffed are called into this number, this is to confess them to be the creatures of God; and that in quality of petitioners, like us poor finful clay, they have nothing in their power, but to beg of God, as we do, through Jefus Christ; which is far from advancing them to the honour of God, or the mediation of Christ. And though we do this on our knees, yet this poslure can no more make it criminal, than it is in children to ask their parents' blessing on their knees; or for the people, in the same posture, to alk a bleffing of a prieft or bishop.

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But if the practice can be thus cleared, yet what can it fignify to pray to the faints,

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fince we cannot be fure the faints hear us? The scripture shews, that the angels know our necessities and prayers: As in the angel praying for Jerusalem and the cities of Judah, Zach, i. 12; and not only mentioning their captivity, but likewife the particular of the years of their being captives. Again, in their rejoicing upon a finner that repents; there being nothing more hidden than the true conversion of a sinner: Then in Rev. viii. 4, The smoke of the incense of the prayers of the saints ascended from the hand of the angel before God. And fince Christ himself fays, that the just in the resurrection Shall be as the angels of heaven, Matt. xxii. 30, and now enjoy the same blissful vision with them; is there not reason to believe that our prayers and concerns are known also to the faints It being likewise recorded of them, that they had golden vials full of odours, which are the prayers of the saints; that is, of the faithful on earth, who are here called faints, as they are often in other places of holy scripture.

But if we suppose that the saints have no particular knowledge of the requests made to them, yet may it still be profitable to define their prayers. For as when a person at church, being informed of many sick in the parish desiring the prayers of the congregation, offers up his prayers, and begs grace

and comfort for all those who defire the prayers of the affembly, this prayer in general may be beneficial in particular to the parties, though he heard nothing in particular of them, and had no knowledge of any one that had defired his charity: So likewife, if the faints pray only in general for fuch on earth as alk their intercession, this may be an advantage to those who ask it, though they have no particular know-ledge of the requests made to them, or of the parties that make them. This is one of St Auftin's answers, who having put this question; How the martyrs bety those, who are certainly belped by them? Among other answers, adds this; That it may be by their praying in general for the necessities of those that ask, as we pray for the dead, with whom we are not present; and where they are, or what they do, we know not, I. de Cur. pro mortuis. If then the primitive fathers queltioning whether the faints hear us, made this no objection against defiring their prayers, but still supposed the practice lawful and profitable; fo the same objection may be made still, without any injury to the present doctrine and practice of the church. Those who want help, and fee the means to obtain it, will not forbear the use of such means, till they can be fatisfied bow and which way

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fuch help comes; and as for those who do it, it is a fign their curiofity is greater than

their wants.

For my part, O God, I confess the bustness of salvation is of so great concern, that I gladly embrace all helps, and think it an argument of indifferency in me to flight any of those ways by which I am affured thou halt given help to others. This is one, of which I have this affurance both from the primitive and present church; it must be therefore rashness in me to despise that which can do no harm, and so great authority declares will do me good. no dum mos

ar from the aproving a reformation, as to own, there rould be no Liverich without it For when I read the doctrines and practices they are deletibed by adverlaries, and confrively charged upon her, I mill confels he formich in their cottany, to common enfer in realon. fenfe, to realon, r to the word of God to take a their runkers though who determ them act their runkers. luch a profession with that of Turks and hisdell. But as it is not jult to take the characher of Christ from the Pharifees, so men ther of the church from her advertaries for prejudice and avertion are never good painters; let the ground of diffike be whee:



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NOVEMBER I

seidt h. ALE-SAINTS.

T AVING, on the past festivals, given a I fhort account of the doctrine of the church, as it is delivered in her general councils, I must now make a conclusion, and it shall be by declaring, that were the church's doctrine such as it is represented and believed by many, I should think her communion as unfafe as they do, and be fo far from disapproving a reformation, as to own, there could be no falvation without it. For when I read the doctrines and practices, as they are described by adversaries, and politively charged upon her, I must confess I see so much in them contrary to common fense, to reason, to the commandments, and to the word of God, that I cannot wonder at those who detest them, nor at their ranking fuch a profession with that of Turks and Infidels. But as it is not just to take the character of Christ from the Pharifees, fo neither of the church from her adversaries; for prejudice and aversion are never good painters; let the ground of diflike be what T iv

it will, fuch is the weakness of our nature, that it is generally influenced by it, even as to our most discerning faculties, so that we are there very often in the dark, where we feem to have the light of demonstration. I do not pretend exemption; but appeal to the whole world to pronounce upon the truth of it, as to our present subject. It is well known, that with great numbers, the character of our church is fuch, as puts it upon the level with infidelity; now let the truth of it be judged by its doctrine, which I will here fet down in short. I have been now many years a member of the church, and though, through my fault, I am not what I have been taught; yet thus I am taught by her. First, To believe in one God, to confels him infinite in power, and goodness, and mercy, that he is the author of all good, and that all depends on his bleffed will. adly, To hope and place my whole confidence of falvation in God, through the merits and passion of his only son, Christ Jesus, bleffed for evermore; fo that whatever I feek, or whatever means I use, it is still with an entire dependence on the goodness and fidelity of God, through Jesus Christ, by whom alone whatever is acceptable to God must become acceptable to him. 23dly, To love him above all things, to feek him as

my chiefest good; and rather to lose all the conveniencies of life than offend against him. Athly, To honour and worship him as God and Sovereign Lord of heaven and earth, and rather to surrender liberty, life, and whatever elfe is dear to me, than give his honour to another, or worship any creature for God. 5thly, To confess, that, if through my misfortune, I fall into sin, I must feek pardon from the mercy of God; that there is no pardon can be hoped, with. out a fincere conversion of the heart to: God, and a true repentance; that there is no power, but of God, can forgive fin. 6thly, That of myself I am a poor sinful creature; that I am capable of doing no good; in order to heaven, but through the grace of God, which is to give me both to will and to do: That I have nothing good in me, but his gifts; that if he rewards any thing in me, he rewards his gifts: That falvation is a work of mercy and grace; that what we do by the grace of God, is no less his work, than what he does alone by his absolute power; that what we give to him, belongs no less to him, than what he gives to us. Lastly, That our whole dependence being thus on God, and having no affurance of our own interior state, we ought not to confide in ourselves; but

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having done all we are able, to recommend ourselves to the mercy of God, still to esteem ourselves unprostable servants, and work out our falvation with sear and trem-

bling.

Thus am I taught by the church, these are the sentiments of my soul, which I have been taught by her books, sermons, and instructions, and with these I hope to be found at my last hour. Now let the christian world judge, whether these doctrines are not according to the Gospel of Christ; whether the church, that teaches them, be no better than heathen; whether there can be a necessity of leaving this church, to be better by any other. And yet this is the church, which lies under the worst of scandals.

But, however, I must so far do right to justice, as to own, that there are some occasions, from which these scandals are taken; much the same, from whence Grotius observes (Judgment of points controv. print. Lond. p. 91.) was taken the occasions of the reformation, that is, from the doctrines of schoolmen introduced by a certain liberty of argumentation; from the doctrines of councils not commodically explained by school-men; from the pride, avarice, ill manners of prelates, and abuses not then corrected; by which the

ancient doctrine of the church being thus overclouded, partly appeared not, partly being difcoloured, seemed other than it was. Such reafons as thefe, there are for the scandals raised against the church. But, however, this neither justifies the raising or continuing thefe fcandals against the church, nor obligeshany to separate from it; since the doctrine of the church is not to be taken from the incommodious explanations of ichoolmen, but from her general councils; and let the church be never to apostolic, there will be ever tares mixed with the corn, the total separation of which must be left to the sharvest at the last day. If then the members of the church are not taught to take their faith from the opinions of the schools, nor their morals from ill example, of the prelates or others, but are at as full liberty of departing from them, as any others, that are out of her communion; if, with the fame, they may renounce all abufes and wicked practices, by whatever prelates they have been connived at or encouraged; though fuch opinions, abufes, and evil practices, may be made an advantage against her; yet they cannot be justly charged upon her, as her doctrine, nor can any of her members be under a necessity of forfaking her communion upon this account For if this was warrantable, they must be obliged to forlake the communion of all christian churches in the world; there being none, which has not abfurd opinions amongst its divines, great abuses in the practice of religion, and abominations com-mitted by some of its pastors: Such as, if drawn out into all the confequences they will bear from a prejudiced hand, would make as monstrous a figure as that church

has, which they forfake.

Well, but if a church is not to answer any more than a common-wealth, for the abules of all governors or members, and for this is not to be overthrown by those who belong to it; yet it may be justly for-faken if it departs from primitive Christiani-ty, if it authorises doctrines contrary to the word of God, if it fets up new articles of faith, and teaches superstition and idolatry. Upon the supposition of such abominations being made evident against the church, a separation from her must be owned just. But how evident then ought fuch proofs to be against an authority, which was established by Christ, which has its commission of teaching the whole world given by Christ, and sealed with his blood; which was secured in teaching the truth by his promises, and which the whole world was commanded to hear under the greatest penalties? How evident, I say, ought such proofs to be against the ordinance of Christ, the spouse of Christ, against that church, which the creed declares to be holy; for it is that church which is arraigned of these crimes?

And where is this evidence? I have fummed up the principal doctrines of the church, against which the charge is laid; and taking them, as they are delivered by general councils, (and so far only are they terms of communion) and as separate from school opinions and abuses; it may be then observed, First, that there is not one point proposed as of faith by the church, but what has been politively fo declared by the legal authority of the church affembled in its pastors, according to the form authorised by the apos-tles, Acts xv. and observed by the primitive church: This is no small point, considering the establishment of the church, its commission of teaching, and the injunction upon the whole world of hearing it. 2dly That what the church has thus declared, is built on the word of God, and on the telli-mony of the primitive fathers: So far, that Grotius, having taken pains in reading the chief writers of old times, all the writers of the three best ages, and those especially, who were esteemed the best interpreters of

fcripture, and then having collected by the testimony of the ancients, what was delivered always, and every where, and constantly, he at last confesses, that be found the fame remaining in that church which is joined to the Roman (ib. ut fup.). Now while the doc. trines disputed have the authority of foripture, of fathers, and of the church, to war. rant them, what can be the evidence against not one rationally expeditional when the ment

The scripture is brought against them, it is fo far true, that objections are brought from feripture against them; and so there are by the Arians and Socinians against the Trinity, and by others against the most fundamental articles of the creed. But where is the evidence, that they, who expound the feripture contrary to the church, understand it better than the church? Can they produce a better commission, surer promises for expounding the scripture, and teaching the truth, than the church does? Has their proceeding been more legal? Can they shew a greater authority, more piety, or learning? If they cannot, where then is their evidence against the doctrines of the church? I will allow they interpret the scripture contrary; to the church; but this comes to no more, than for a plaintiff to expound the law in favour of his own cause; and will this pass

for an evidence of liveright in any court of the ancients, what wildlive and

adly. The fathers are brought against the doctrines of the church, It is true, there are objections out of the fathers; and if the fcripture itself be fo penned, that some expressions of it are objections against others. it can be no surprise to find the same in the great volumes of the fathers. But would not one rationally expect, that when the appeal is made to the primitive church, the paftors of that ancient church should be produced, evidently condemning those doctrines, which are of late condemned as errors? And yet when the whole matter is examined, the greatest part of those, who feparated from the church upon the prefumption of errors, have charged the primitive fathers with the fame errors; and in this owned, that those ancient prelates taught the very fame, which the church at present teaches. And though others not pleased with this concession, have found way to interpret all those testimonies of the fathers, contrary to the plain import of the words; yet how far is this from making antiquity a plain evidence against the church. to prove that her doctrines are innovation than for a plaintil to expound thrors and tivour of his own caute; and will this pale

These are the two great proofs advanced against the church; and yet when duly considered how far are they from evidence? And if there is so little in them, that such deposition would not be allowed in any court of judicature, for carrying a cause of the most trivial concern; how can they be fufficient against the church, whose institution and commission are divine, and whose peace cannot be broken, but with the worst of crimes? Besides these, if we consider other proofs, and which prevail with great numbers, such as are unjust calum, nies, misconstructions of prejudice and pass fion, monfrous confequences from school opinions, abuses in matters of fact, with infinite other fatyrs, these are so far from the evidence required in a matter of fo great a concern, that no body can help suspecting a cause, which by such undue ways makes its defence. But this is an ungrateful matter, and therefore I forbear; and only repeat again, that having weighed with all the ferioufness I am able, the proofs advanced against the church, upon which, by so many, the is condemned of innovation and error, I can find no evidence in them; which yet ought to be very great for pailing fuch a fentence; because, as has been hinted, the all others of chois, who are not of their

authority arraigned, is that which God has fet over us, and laid such strict commands on us of hearing, obeying, submitting, and being subject to it. 2dly, Because of the ripeace, and living in fuch charity as becomes the members of the fame mystical body of Christ. Lastly, Because of the weighty in conveniencies that must unavoidably attend it! For if the authority of the church be once overthrown, and judged insufficient, and not to be depended on for teaching truth, whatever churches after this are fet ep, they can have no right, title, or authority, upon which they can oblige any in conscience to receive and believe what they teach; but are exposed to the censures of all that diflike their doctrine; all are left to the liberty of their own private fense and judgment; and thus comes the whole ordinance of Christ to be subverted; fince inflead of the whole world being united in one faith, and being one body, all will be in division, neither peace, union, nor charity being amongst them: All judging themselves sufficient judges; all abounding in their own sense; all finding proofs to main-tain their own thoughts; and sew failing in that positiveness and pride, as to condemn all others of errors, who are not of their mind: Thus what Christ fixed upon a rock, is all brought upon the fand: A fad state of Christ's church, if this be the state of it! These hints must suffice.

And now it is time I should conclude; and how? But by begging the blessing of Almighty God upon these and other instructions, which I have published, that they may be to the honour of his holy name, and the good of my neighbour; and by making this request to my neighbours, whether members of the church or not; that they would read all with that charity which is due to one, who has no other design than to shew them the morality and truth of the Gospel. If I have been miltaken in any thing, I beseech thee, O God, to supply it by thy heavenly light. Amen, I say, with all sincerity, and from my heart, beginning

"makerin appointed to the so the society times have endeavoured to the society description of what the same society and second to what the had second stay considered to the presence of the same society society to be society and the society of the society that the society of the society that the

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TAVING given some account in these instructions of the faith of the church, I here repeat it again in short, that so the members of it may have opportunity of seeing, at one glance, what their church teaches; and all others, whose moderation inclines them to peace, may see how far debates may be dessented.

"to believe the apostles creed, and likewise to assent to such declarations of the faith received, which she has been obliged to make in opposition to those, who, at any time, have endeavoured to spread new doctrines amongst the faithful, contrary to what she had received. She being obliged not to permit any doctrine received from the primitive church to be condemned; nor to suffer any practice, helpful to salvation, to be brought into contempt. To satisfy then this obligation and trust reposed in her, she has made several declarations, which I will

" here fet down with fome fhort illustration

"to them, taken out of her general coun-

"cils, or most approved catechisms.

"That apostolical and ecclesiastical tra-

" ditions are to be received by the faithful;

" that is, fuch doctrines and matters of dif-

of cipline which have been received from the

of apostles and primitive church, and deli-

vered down to us by the living voice of the faithful.

That the facred fcripture ought to be

" understood in that sense, which the church has always held, and does hold; which being ordained by Christ to teach

" the truth, has in this the best title for

expounding it; and having continued

through all ages from the apoliles days,

" has had the opportunity of delivering "down the lense of it received from the prefeat in the facigment, while wellogal

That there are feven facraments, or " feven outward figns of inward grace, in-

"flituted by Chrift, though all of them

on not necessary for all. These are Baptifm,

" the facrament of the Lord's Supper, Con-

of firmation, in which the Holy Ghoff is

"poured forth upon the faithful by the im-

polition of hands, &c. Penance, in which

"pardon of fin is promised upon the con-

" fession of a fincere repentance, and the

absolution of the pastor; Entreme Unstien, or the last anointing, where grace is promised to the sick upon anointing with oil, and the prayer of faith, James v. 14; Holy Order, in which power and grace is given through the Holy Ghost to the ministers of the church, by the imposition of hands; Matrimony, which is raised to the dignity of a sacrament in the new law, and to such as worthily receive it, gives grace for satisfying the duties of that state.

"That the rites and ceremonies appointed"
by the church in the administration of the
facraments be received; it being just that
the members of the church should ap
prove what the church, upon due considerations, has ordered in spiritual affairs.

"That Christ is really and substantially present in the sacrament, under the forms of bread and wine; as the Holy Chost was really present under the form of a dove. That this presence of Christ is not in a corporeal, but inestable manner: That this presence is effected by the same power of God, by which the rivers of Egypt were changed into blood, and the water into wine at Cana of Galilee, which

" change of the substance of the bread and " wine, into the body and blood of Christ

" in the facrament, is called by the church

" transubstantiation

"That the offering of the body and " blood of Christ, under the form of bread

" and wine, is a memorial of Christ's pas-

" fion, and a proper facrifice, available with

"God, for obtaining bleffings on the living

of and the dead, by laying before the eternal

Father the infinite value of his Son's bit-

"ter passion.

"That Christ being really prefent, both " under the form of bread, and likewife " under the form of wine, it is good and of profitable to receive the holy communion in one kind, or in both. That amongst " the primitive Christians, it being received " fometimes in one kind, though more ge-" nerally in both, it is subject (like other

" matters of discipline) to the orders of the

" church, and to be done as the shall judge

or proper.

That fuch fouls as depart this life, not under the guilt of damnation, and yet not " fo pure as to be immediately fit for hea-" ven, are deposited in a third place, by the " church called Purgatory, where they are of purified by suffering, and relieved by the prayers and alms of their fellow-members

on earth, till they are admitted by the di-

vine goodness into heaven.

"That as it is good and profitable to alk the faithful on earth to pray for us; fo it is good and profitable to ask the bleffed in heaven to pray for us, for obtaining bleffings of God through his Son Jesus Christ, who alone is our Redeemer

and Saviour, and ald guinisade not chard "That the images of Christ, Virgin Mary, &c. have no divinity or power in them for which they are to be worthip-" ped, confided in, or prayed to; but there is a veneration due to them, as to other Sholy things which belong to the fervice. of God, or are helpful to the faithful in ferying him; and that this veneration, which is due, ought to be given them.

"That a like holy respect or veneration is due to the relicks of faints, as to other

holy things.

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"That Christ having given to the pastors of his church the power of binding and "loofing, the faid pastors may, in virtue of that power, enjoin penalties on finners, and likewise upon due motives, release them, the grant of which release is called an Indulgence.

"That Christ having given to the pastors " of the Church the power of forgiving or retaining fins, they have this power: That this power is of God, and the paftors are the ministers of it: That if pe" nitents are prepared by a fincere repentance in the confession of their sins, the

" absolution of the pastors has its effect, so that what is forgiven by them on earth is

" forgiven in heaven: As in baptism, ori-

" ginal fin is forgiven by them as the mi-

" nisters of God.

"That St Peter had a particular power given him by Christ, above the other apostles, for the preserving unity in the church, and preventing schism: That this prerogative is derived to his successors for

" answering the same necessities of the

" church.

" world."

"That as all were obliged to hear the apostles, and to join in communion with them; so are all obliged to embrace the faith and communion of the holy cathodic lic church which Christ established upon earth, and which has had in all ages a continual succession of her pastors and her faith from the apostles. Christ having promised her his Holy Spirit: And that he would remain with her to the end of the

All these points the church has declared: And the substance of them, as they are delivered by the council of *Trent*, and expressed in the common profession, are to be assented to by all the faithful; so that these,

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are terms of communion, and none can be a member of the church, who does not positively affent to them, either by an explicit or implicit faith. The reason is, because not only to doubt of, but even to suspend an affent, as to any one point, which the church has declared to be of faith, is to question the authority, the commission, and the truth of the church: fince these are all involved in every fuch declaration she makes, and every article, in this fense, is equally fundamental; there being not any one, though feemingly of an inferior concern, but upon its being questioned, the authority and whole constitution of the church is, upon this, as much overthrown, as if the truth of its declarations were questioned in the highest mysteries of the christian faith; fince though the subject or matter of the declarations may be very different, yet her authority and truth are alike concerned in all.

These points then are to be assented to with a positive faith, and there is this general motive for giving such assent: That, upon these doctrines and practices being questioned, the church appeared in her pastors, assembled, and upon a due examination, declared, that such doctrines and practices had been delivered to her, and were received from the primitive church and the apostles; Vol. VII.

and therefore were not to be brought into contempt, or opposed, but embraced by the faithful, and delivered to succeeding ages, in the same manner as they had been received.

Thus the standing church of all ages has declared; and she being the best witness of what doctrines had been thus declared from the apostles and primitive church; and likewise being ordained by Christ for teaching the truth, and every way qualified for answering this end of her institution; there is in this a sufficient motive for receiving what she has declared; and a disbelief of her cannot be separated from the confusion of private judgment, which, upon the disowning a decisive power in the church, has no tie of conscience to be a bar to its unlimited presumptions.

Not but that there may be still matter for objection, both from Scripture, fathers, and reason, after the declaration of the church: For such there were advanced against the decisions of the first general councils; the Arians, Nestorians, and Macedonians, who had been condemned by them, appealing to Scripture, the fathers, and reason, for justifying their opinions against the definition of the church; and every one, that is versed in Scripture and fathers, cannot but see, that wit and learning can never be at a loss for arguments out of these, in defence of the

groffest absurdities both in faith and morals, if the liberty of their own interpretations be allowed them: Kut then as such objections, in those former times, were of no weight against the church, for invalidating her decisions; so neither ought they to be now; for as, the church proceeding according to the method of the primitive church, her decisions ought to have the same authority with those that are more primitive; so the objections against her more primitive decisions, can have no more weight in them, than those former objections had.

These points are the only ground of difference in doctrine between the mother church and other separate congregations; so that if there could be an agreement in these, the scandalous schisms of Christendom would be in a great part removed. For as for all those other heads, upon which the breach is kept open, and even widened every day, I cannot but look on them, as the advantages, which prejudice and passion take, which confult not justice in the management of their cause. For what if there be many incommodious opinions of school-men; abuses in the practice of religion; pride and covet-oulnels amongst its professors and pastors? What if notorious barbarities have been contrived and carried on by some of its mem-

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bers, and have had the countenance of fome m greafest dignity? Yet not body can say with truth, that these articles of our religion; that they have been determined by general councils, and that the members of the church are obliged to subscribe to them, of approve them. No, they are not the refult of councils, nor have any part in our profession of faith; and therefore ought to be made no part of controversy, nor be taken up as arguments for separating from the doctrine and faith of the church. The faith indeed of the church is to be received with an affent free from doubt, grounded upon the wildom, goodness, and fidelity of Christ, who both ordained and qualified her for teaching his truths: But as for the abuses and scandalous practices of some of its professors, these are no more to be approved, than the tares amongst the corn; Moses is to be followed by the people, as God gives command, but yet they are not obliged to approve his impatience and murmuring; nor yet can the knowledge of his failings, justify the people in withdrawing from his conduct. The church has a promife for teaching truth; and in this the is to be followed, but there is no promise, that all that belong to her, shall be Saints, and therefore there can be no necessity of defending or approving all that these do. Why then should these be made

the subject of controversy, when the members of the church have as great a fense of these disorders, as those, who are not of her communion; when they lament, what others' reproach, and make it their daily prayer, that God would please to take away all feandals? If all would join in the fame prayer, it would be a much better expedient for peace, than those heats, which being not kindled by charity, cannot be bleffed with so happy a fruit. Let then all that defire peace, remember, that the only difficulty is in those articles, in which the church declares the faith she has received; and as for other opinions, abuses and ill practices, the members of the church are no more obliged to affent to them, than others, who are out of the pale. For the terms then of communion, let them be confidered with the authority that has proposed them: And asfor all other things, let them not reproach, but pray, that God will reform both paltors and people, correct abuses, root out ambition, pride, covetoufness, and luxury, and establish the hearts of all with such principles of the Gospel, that religion may no more be made a cover to unwarrantable and wicked defigns; but only be for the honour of God's holy name, and the falvation of those, whom Christ has purchased by his blood.

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the Appendix.

CHALLENGE.

TT will not be denied, but that the church I of Rome was once a most pure, excellent, flourishing, and mother church + Rom, 1.8. Rom. 16. Rom. 6. White, defence of his way, p. 43. 4. King James in his speech to the parliament. Whitaker in his answer to Dr. Scan. 2. demonstrat. Ful. in c. 22. Thef. S. 7. Reynolds in his 5 conclusion of a normal

This church could not cease to be fuch, but the must fall either by apostaly, herely, d

christians, or broke communiques midal ro 1. Apostosy is not only a renouncing of the faith of Christ, but the very name and title to christianity: No man will say, that the church of Rome had ever fuch a fall, or 3. Where was the true church whisund lla

2. Heresy is an adhesion to some private and fingular opinion, or error in faith, contrary to the general approved doctrine of the

church.

when there campot her an If the church of Rome did ever adhere to any fingular or new opinion difagreeable to the common received doctrine of the christing tian world, I pray fatisfy me as to thefe particulars, viz.

1. By what general council was she ever

condemned?

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2. Which of the Fathers ever writ against her? Or,

3. By what authority was the otherwise

reproved?-For,

It feems to be a thing very incongruous, that so great a church should be condemned by every one, that hath a mind to condemned here.

3. Schism is a departure or division from the unity of the church, whereby the band and communion held with some former

church, is broken and diffolved.

If ever the church of Rome divided herself by Jchism from any other body of faithful christians, or broke communion, or went forth from the society of an elder church: I pray satisfy me as to these particulars,

Whole company did the leave?

2. From what body did the go forth?

3. Where was the true church which the forfook?

For it appears a little strange to me, that a church should be accounted schismatical, when there cannot be assigned any other church different from her (which from age to age, since Christ's time has continued visible) from whence she departed.

gt gerenal Munciliwas he ever

AND WASHINGTON hirteenth Sunday after Pentecoft, ourteenth Sunday after Pentecolt, if the earth Sunday after Pentecolt, a central control of the Pentecolt. Eighteenth Sudday, wer Pent. To OW Sunday, The yaband did Page VI Second Sunday after Eafter Atamem 10 Third Sunday after Easter, and find your 19 Fourth Sunday after Easter, bnoost-vinew 29 Fifth Sunday ofter Easter, and bright vinew 39 Afcension-Day, The valuate drust-vinew 49 Sunday within the Octave of Ascention, 1919 38 Whit-Sunday, A story Wolf the Holy White-Sunday, Manuel Holy Cross, Ma Monday in Whitfun-Week, 101 .2 30 .vis 76 Tuelday in Whitfun-Week, and was rester . 84 Trinity-Sunday, July 25 July 25 Corpus-Christi Day, July 26 July 301 Sunday within the Octave of Corpus-1 ? Christi, gua migny and to quality Third Sunday after Pentecost, molodina 123 Fourth Sunday after Pentecost, dr 10 .vii 134 Fifth Sunday after Pentecoft, wednes 141 Sixth Sunday after Pentecost, 198001/149 Seventh Sunday after Pentecoft, a noming 156 Eighth Sunday after Pentecoff 2 200188 163 Ninth Sunday after Pentecost, xibasq 1/1 Tenth Sunday after Pentecost, 2 silvis 179 Eleventh Sunday after Pentecost, 186

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